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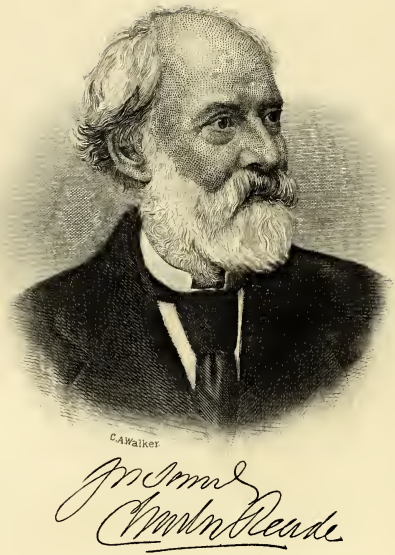
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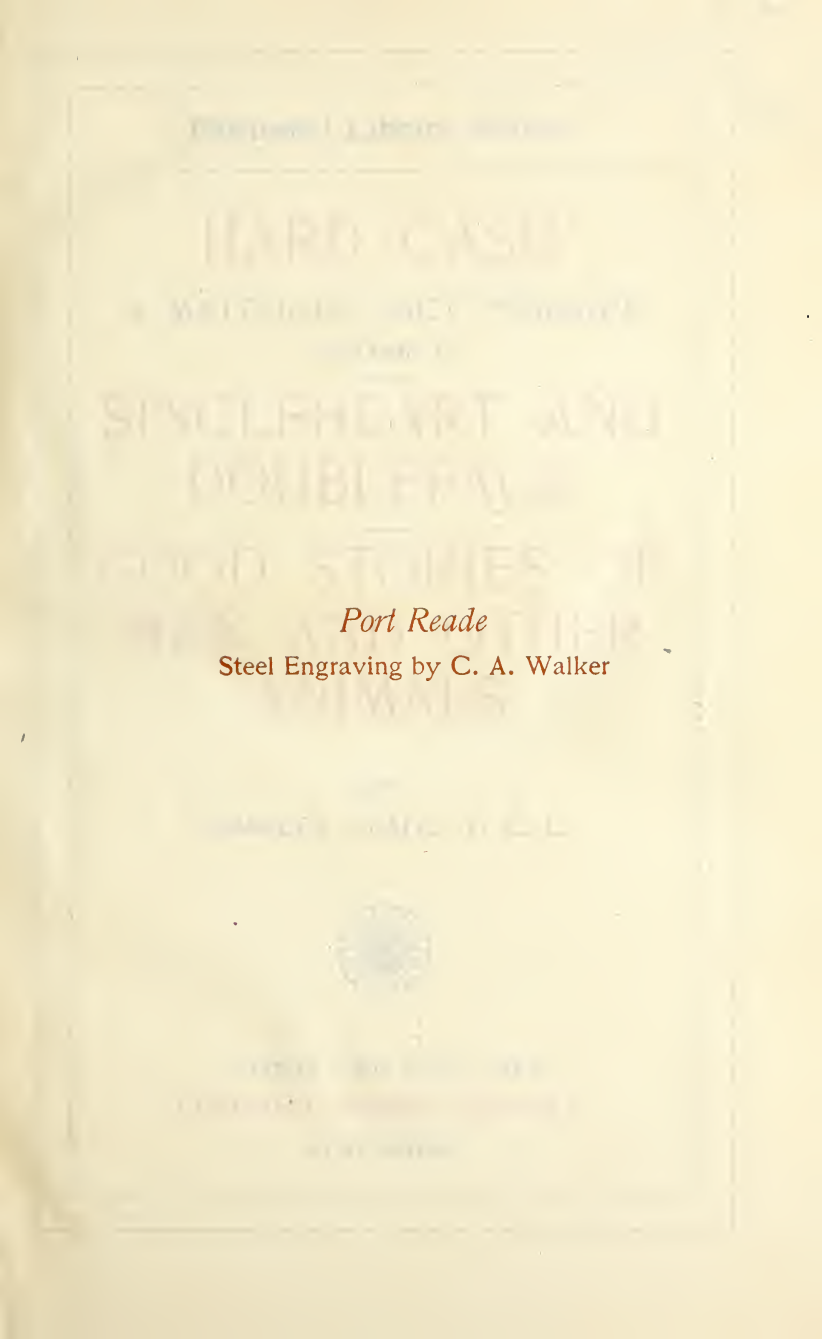

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Illustrated Library Edition

HARD CASH

A MATTER-OF-FACT ROMANCE

VOLUME II

SINGLEHEART AND DOUBLEFACE

GOOD STORIES OF MAN AND OTHER ANIMALS

BY

CHARLES READE, D. C. L.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
COLONIAL PRESS COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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HARD CASH.

CHAPTER I.

Sampson's placard was on Barkington walls, and inside the asylum Alfred was softening hearts and buying consciences, as related; so, in fact, he had two strings to his bow.

But mark how strangely things turn; these two strings got entangled. His father, alarmed by the placard, had called at the pawnbroker's shop, and told him he must move Alfred directly to a London asylum. Baker raised objections; Mr. Hardie crushed them with his purse, i. e., with his son's and victim's sweetheart's father's money; so then, as Baker after all could not resist the project, but only postpone it for a day or two, he preferred to take a handsome present, and co-operate; he even connived at Mr. Hardie's signing the requisite name to the new order. This the giddy world calls forgery; but, in these calm retreats, far from the public's inquisitive eye, it goes for nothing. Why, Mrs. Archbold had signed Baker's name and Dr. Bailey's more than a hundred several times to orders, statements, and certificates; depriving Englishmen of their liberty and their property with a gesture of her taper fingers; and venting the conventional terms, "aberration," "exaltation," "depression," "debility," "paralysis," "excitable," "abnormal,"

as boldly and blindly as any male starling in the flock.

On the very night then of Alfred's projected escape, two keepers came down from Dr. Wycherley's asylum to Silverton station: Baker met them and drove them to Silverton House in his dog-cart. They were to take Alfred up by the night train; and, when he came into the kitchen with Brown, they suspected nothing, nor did Baker or Cooper, who presently emerged from the back kitchen. Brown saw, and recovered his wits partially. "Shall I go for his portmanteau, sir?" stammered he, making a shrewd and fortunate guess at what was up. Baker assented; and soon after went out to get the horse harnessed: on this Mrs. Archbold, pale, sorrowful, and silent hitherto, beckoned Alfred into the back kitchen, and there gave him his watch and his loose money. "I took care of them for you," said she; "for the like have often been stolen in this place. Put the money in your shoes; it may be useful to you."

He thanked her somewhat sullenly: for his disappointment was so deep and bitter that small kindnesses almost irritated him.

She sighed. "It is cruel to be angry with *me*," she said: "I am not the cause of this; it is a heavier blow to me than to you. Sooner or later you will be free — and then you will not waste a thought on me, I fear — but I must remain in this odious prison without your eyes and your smile to lighten me, yet unable to forget you. O Alfred, for mercy's sake whisper me one kind word at parting; give me one kind look to remember and dote upon."

She put out both hands as eloquently as she spoke, and overpowered his prudence so far that he took her offered hands — they were as cold now as they were burning hot the last time — and pressed them, and said, "I shall be grateful to you while I live."

The passionate woman snatched her hands away. "Gratitude is too cold for me," she cried; "I scorn even yours. Love me or hate me."

He made no reply. And so they parted.

"Will you pledge your honor to make no attempt at escape on the road?" asked the pawnbroker on his return.

"I'll see you d——d first," replied the prisoner.

On this he was handcuffed, and helped into the dog-cart.

They went up to town by the midnight train; but, to Alfred's astonishment and delight, did not take a carriage to themselves.

However, station after station was passed, and nobody came into their carriage. At last they stopped at a larger station, and a good many people were on the platform; Alfred took this opportunity and appealed in gentle but moving terms to the first good and intelligent face he saw. "Sir," said he, "I implore your assistance."

The gentleman turned courteously to him. The keepers, to Alfred's surprise, did not interrupt.

"I am the victim of a conspiracy, sir; they pretend I am mad, and are taking me by force to a madhouse, a living tomb."

"You certainly don't appear to be mad," said the gentleman.

The head keeper instantly showed him the order and a copy of the certificates.

"Don't look at *them*, sir," cried Alfred; "they are signed by men who were bribed to sign them. For pity's sake, sir, judge for yourself. Test my memory, my judgment, by any question you please. Use your own good-sense; don't let those venal rogues judge for you."

The gentleman turned cold directly.

"I could not take on me to interfere," said he. The unsworn affidavits had overpowered his senses. He retired with a frigid inclination. Alfred wrung his handcuffed hands, and the connecting chain rattled.

The men never complained; his conduct was natural, and they knew their strength. At the next station he tested a snob's humanity instead of a gentleman's. He had heard they were more tender-hearted. The answer was a broad grin, repeated at intervals.

Being called mad was pretty much the same thing as being mad, to a mind of this class; and Alfred had admitted he was called mad.

At the next station he implored a silvery-haired old gentleman. Old age, he had heard, has known griefs, and learned pity.

The keeper showed the certificates.

"Ah!" said Senex; "poor young man. Now don't agitate yourself. It is all for your good. Pray go quietly. Very painful, very painful." And he hobbled away as fast as he could. It is by shirking the painful, some live to be silvery old.

Next he tried a policeman. Bobby listened to him erect as a dart.

The certificates were shown him.

He eyed them and said sharply, "All right." Nor could Alfred's entreaties and appeals to common-sense attract a word or even a look from him. Alfred cried, "Help! murder! If you are Englishmen, if you are Christians, help me."

This soon drew a crowd round him, listening to his fiery tale of wrong, and crying, "Shame, shame! Let him go." The keepers touched their heads, winked, and got out and showed the certificates; the crowd melted away like wax before those two suns of evidence (unsworn). The train moved on.

It was appalling. How could he ever get free? Between his mind and that of his fellows there lay a spiritual barrier more impassable than the walls of fortified cities.

Yet, at the very next station, with characteristic tenacity of purpose, he tried again; for he saw a woman standing near, a buxom country woman of forty. Then he remembered that the naked eye was not yet an extinct institution among her sex. He told her his tale, and implored her to use her own eyes. She seemed struck, and did eye him far more closely than the men had, and told the keepers they ought to be ashamed of themselves; he was no madman, for she had seen madmen. They showed her the certificates.

"Oh, I am no scholar!" said she, contemptuously; "ye can't write my two eyes out of my head."

The keeper whipped off Alfred's cap and showed his shaven crown.

"La! so he is," said she, lowering her tone; "dear heart, what a pity! And such a pretty young gentleman." And after that, all he could say only drew the dew of patient pity to her eyes.

The train went on and left her standing there, a statue of negative clemency. Alfred lost heart. He felt how impotent he was. "I shall die in a madhouse," he said. He shivered in a corner, hating man, and doubting God.

They reached Dr. Wycherley's early in the morning. Alfred was shown into a nice clean bedroom, and asked whether he would like to bathe or sleep. "Oh, a bath," he said; and was allowed to bathe himself. He had not been long in the water when Dr. Wycherley's medical assistant tapped at the door, and then entered without further ceremony; a young gentleman with a longish down on his chin, which, initiated early in the secrets of

physiology, he was too knowing to shave off and so go to meet his trouble. He came in looking like a machine, with a note-book in his hand, and stood by the bath side dictating notes to himself and jotting them down.

"Six contusions: two on the thorax, one on the abdomen, two on the thighs, one near the patella; turn, please." Alfred turned in the water; "A slight dorsal abrasion; also of the wrists; a severe excoriation of the ankle. Leg-lock, eh?"

"Yes."

"Iron leg-lock. Head shaved. Large blister. Good! Any other injuries external or internal under old system?"

"Yes, sir; confined as a madman, though sane, as *you*, I am sure, have the sense to see."

"Oh, never mind that; we are all sane here — except the governor and I."

He whipped out, and entered the condition of the new patient's body with jealous minuteness in the case-book. As for his mind, he made no inquiry into that; indeed, he was little qualified for researches of the kind.

At breakfast Alfred sat with a number of mad ladies and gentlemen, who, by firmness, kindness, and routine, had been led into excellent habits; the linen was clean, and the food good. He made an excellent meal, and set about escaping: with this view he explored the place. Nobody interfered with him, but plenty of eyes watched him. The house was on the non-restraint system. He soon found this system was as bad for him as it was good for the insane. Non-restraint implied a great many attendants, and constant vigilance. Moreover, the doors were strong, the windows opened only eight inches, and that from the top; their framework was iron, painted like wood, etc. It was next to impossible to get into the yard at night; and then it looked quite impossible to get

any further, for the house was encompassed by high walls.

He resigned all hope of escape without connivance. He sounded a keeper; the man fired at the first word. "Come, none of that, sir; you should know better than tempt a poor man."

Alfred colored to the eyes, and sighed deeply. To have honor thrown in his face, and made the reason for not aiding him to baffle a dishonorable conspiracy! But he took the reproof so sweetly, the man was touched, and by and by, seeing him deeply dejected, said good-naturedly, "Don't be down on your luck, sir. If you are really better, which you don't look to have much the matter now, why not write to the commissioners and ask to be let out?"

"Because my letters will be intercepted."

"Ay, to your friends; but not to the Commissioners of Lunacy. Not in this house, anyway."

"God bless you!" cried Alfred, impetuously. "You are my benefactor; you are an honest fellow; give me your hand."

"Well, why not? Only you mustn't excite yourself. Take it easy." (Formula.)

"Oh, no cant among friends!" said Alfred: "wouldn't you be excited at the hope of getting out of prison?"

"Well, I don't know but I might. Bound I am as sick of it as you are."

Alfred got paper and sketched the letter on which so much depended. It took him six hours. He tore up two; he cooled down the third, and condensed it severely; by this means, after much thought, he produced a close and telling composition; he also weeded it of every trait and every term he had observed in mad people's talk, or the letters they had shown him. So there was no incoherency, no heat, no prolixity, no

"spies," no "conspiracy," no italics. A simple, honest, earnest story, with bitter truth stamped on every line; a sober, strong appeal from a sore heart but hard head, to the arbiters of his fate.

To the best of my belief no madman, however slightly touched, or however cunning, ever wrote a letter so gentle yet strong, so earnest yet calm, so short yet full, and withal so lucid and cleanly jointed, as this was; and I am no contemptible judge; for I have accumulated during the last few years a large collection of letters from persons deranged in various degrees, and studied them minutely, more minutely than most psychologicals study anything but pounds, shillings, and verbiage.

The letter went, and he hoped but scarcely expected an answer by return of post. It did not come. He said to his heart, "Be still;" and waited. Another day went by; and another: he gnawed his heart and waited; he pined, and waited on. The secret tribunal, which was all a shallow legislature had left him, "took it easy." Secret tribunals always do.

But, while the victim-suitor longed and pined and languished for one sound from the voice of justice and humanity, and while the secret tribunal, not being in prison itself all this time, "took it easy," events occurred at Barkington that bade fair to throw open the prison-doors, and bring father and son, bride and bridegroom together again under one roof.

But at what a price!

CHAPTER II.

At sight of Sampson's placard, Mr. Hardie was seized with a tremor, that suspended the razor in mid-air; he opened the window, and glared at the doctor's notice.

At this moment he himself was a picture; not unlike those half-cleaned portraits the picture restorers hang out as specimens of their art.

"Insolent, interfering fool!" he muttered, and began to walk the room in agitation. After awhile he made a strong effort, shaved the other half, and dressed slowly, thinking hard all the time. The result was, he went out before breakfast (which he had not done for years), and visited Mr. Baker, for what purpose has been already shown.

On his return, Jane was waiting breakfast. The first word to him was, "Papa, have you seen?"

"What, the reward?" said he, indifferently. "Yes, I noticed it at our door as I came home."

Jane said it was a very improper and most indelicate interference in their affairs, and went on to say with heightened color, "I have just told Peggy to take it down."

"Not for the world!" cried Mr. Hardie, losing all his calmness, real or feigned; and he rang the bell hastily. On Peggy's appearing, he said anxiously, "I do not wish that notice interfered with."

"I shouldn't think of touching it without your orders, sir," said she, quietly, and shot him a feline glance from under her pale lashes.

Jane colored, and looked a little mortified; but on

Peggy's retiring, Mr. Hardie explained that, whether judicious or not, it was a friendly act of Dr. Sampson's; and to pull down his notice would look like siding with the boy against those he had injured; "Besides," said he, "why should you and I burk inquiry? Ill as he has used me, I am his father and not altogether without anxiety. Suppose those doctors should be right about him, you know?"

Jane had for some time been longing to call at Albion Villa and sympathize with her friend, and now curiosity was superadded: she burned to know whether the Dodds knew of or approved this placard. She asked her father whether he thought she could go there with propriety. "Why not?" said he cheerfully and with assumed carelessness.

In reality it was essential to him that Jane should visit the Dodds. Surrounded by pitfalls, threatened with a new and mysterious assailant in the eccentric, but keen and resolute, Sampson, this artful man, who had now become a very Machiavel, constant danger and deceit had so sharpened and deepened his great natural abilities, was preparing amongst other defences a shield, and that shield was a sieve, and that sieve was his daughter. In fact, ever since his return, he had acted and spoken at the Dodds through Jane, but with a masterly appearance of simplicity and mere confidential intercourse. At least, I think this is the true clew to all his recent remarks.

Jane, a truthful, unsuspicious girl, was all the fitter instrument of the cunning monster. She went and called at Albion Villa, and was received by Edward, Mrs. Dodd being up-stairs with Julia, and in five minutes she had told him what her father, she owned, had said to her in confidence. "But," said she, "the reason I repeat these things is to make peace, and that

you may not fancy there is any one in our house so cruel, so unchristian, as to approve Alfred's perfidy. Oh, and papa said candidly he disliked the match, but then he disliked this way of ending it far more."

Mrs. Dodd came down in due course, and kissed her; but told her Julia could not see even her at present. "I think, dear," said she, "in a day or two she will see *you;* but no one else; and for her sake we shall now hurry our departure from this place, where she was once so happy."

Mrs. Dodd did not like to begin about Alfred; but Jane had no such scruples; she inveighed warmly against his conduct, and, ere she left the house, had quite done away with the faint suspicion Sampson had engendered, and brought both Mrs. Dodd and Edward back to their original opinion that the elder Hardie had nothing on earth to do with the perfidy of the younger.

Just before dinner a gentleman called on Edward, and proved to be a policeman in plain clothes. He had been sent from the office to sound the hostler at the "White Lion," and, if necessary, to threaten him. The police knew, though nobody else in Barkington did, that this hostler had been in what rogues call trouble, twice, and, as the police can starve a man of the kind by blowing on him, and can reward him by keeping dark, he knows better than withhold information from them.

However, on looking for this hostler, he had left his place that very morning; had decamped with mysterious suddenness.

Here was a puzzle.

Had the man gone without noticing the reward? Had somebody outbid the reward? or was it a strange coincidence, and did he after all know nothing?

The police thought it was no coincidence, and he did know something; so they had telegraphed to the London office to mark him down.

Edward thanked his visitor; but, on his retiring, told his mother he could make neither head nor tail of it; and she only said, "We seem surrounded by mystery."

Meantime, unknown to these bewildered ones, Greek was meeting Greek only a few yards off.

Mr. Hardie was being undermined by a man of his own calibre, one too cautious to communicate with the Dodds, or any one else, till his work looked ripe.

The game began thus: a decent mechanic, who lodged hard by, lounging with his pipe near the gate of Musgrove Cottage, offered to converse with old Betty; she gave him a rough answer; but with a touch of ineradicable vanity must ask Peggy if she wanted a sweetheart, because there was a hungry one at the gate: "Why, he wanted to begin on an old woman like me." Peggy inquired what he had said to her.

"Oh, he begun where most of them ends, if they get so far at all; axed me was I comfortable here; if not, he knew a young man wanted a nice tidy body to keep house for him."

Peggy pricked up her ears; and, in less than a quarter of an hour, went for a box of lucifers in a new bonnet and clean collar. She tripped past the able mechanic very accidentally, and he bestowed an admiring smile on her, but said nothing, only smoked. However, on her return, he contrived to detain her, and paid her a good many compliments, which she took laughingly and with no great appearance of believing them. However, there is no going by that; compliments sink; and within forty-eight hours the able mechanic had become a hot wooer of Peggy Black, always on the lookout for her day and night, and telling her all about the lump of money he had saved, and how he could double his income, if he had but a counter, and tidy wife behind it. Peggy gossiped in turn, and let out amongst the rest

that she had been turned off once, just for answering a little sharply; and now it was the other way; her master was a trifle too civil at times.

"Who could help it?" said the able mechanic, rapturously; and offered a pressing civility; which Peggy fought off.

"Not so free, young man," said she. "Kissing is the prologue to sin."

"How do you know that?" inquired the able mechanic, with the sly humor of his class.

"It is a saying," replied Peggy, demurely.

At last, one night, Mr. Green the detective, for he it was, put his arm round his new sweetheart's waist, and approached the subject nearest his heart. He told her he had just found out there was money enough to be made in one day to set them up for life in a nice little shop; and she could help in it.

After this inviting preamble he crept towards the fourteen thousand pounds by artful questions; and soon elicited that there had been high words between master and Mr. Alfred about that very sum; she had listened at the door and heard. Taking care to combine close courtship with cunning interrogatories, he was soon enabled to write to Dr. Sampson, and say that a servant of Mr. Hardie's was down on him, and reported that he carried a large pocket-book in his breast-pocket by day; and she had found the dent of it under his pillow at night; a stroke of observation very creditable in an unprofessional female; on this he had made it his business to meet Mr. Hardie in broad day, and sure enough the pocket-book was always there. He added, that the said Hardie's face wore an expression which he had seen more than once when respectable parties went in for felony; and altogether thought they might now take out a warrant and proceed in the regular way.

Sampson received this news with great satisfaction; but was crippled by the interwoven relations of the parties.

To arrest Mr. Hardie on a warrant would entail a prosecution for felony, and separate Jane and Edward forever.

He telegraphed Green to meet him at the station; and reached Barkington at eight that very evening. Green and he proceeded to Albion Villa, and there they held a long and earnest consultation with Edward; and at last, on certain conditions, Mr. Green and Edward consented to act on Sampson's plan. Green, by this time, knew all Mr. Hardie's out-of-door habits; and assured them that at ten o'clock he would walk up and down the road for at least half an hour, the night being dry. It wanted about a quarter to ten, when Mrs. Dodd came down, and proposed supper to the travellers. Sampson declined it for the present; and said they had work to do at eleven. Then, making the others a signal not to disclose anything at present, he drew her aside and asked after Julia.

Mrs. Dodd sighed: "She goes from one thing to another, but always returns to one idea; that he is a victim, not a traitor."

"Well, tell her in one hour the money shall be in the house."

"The money! What does she care?"

"Well, say we shall know all about Alfred by eleven o'clock."

"My dear friend, be prudent," said Mrs. Dodd. "I feel alarmed; you were speaking almost in a whisper when I came in."

"Y' are very obsairvant; but dawnt be uneasy; we are three to one. Just go and comfort Miss Julee with my message."

"Ah, that I will," she said.

She was no sooner gone than they all stole out into the night, and a pitch-dark night it was; but Green had a powerful dark lantern to use if necessary.

They waited, Green at the gate of Musgrove Cottage, the other two a little way up the road.

Ten o'clock struck. Some minutes passed without the expected signal from Green; and Edward and Sampson began to shiver. For it was very cold and dark, and in the next place they were honest men going to take the law into their own hands, and the law sometimes calls that breaking the law. "Confound him!" muttered Sampson; "if he does not soon come I shall run away. It is bitterly cold."

Presently footsteps were heard approaching; but no signal: it proved to be only a fellow in a smock-frock rolling home from the public-house.

Just as his footsteps died away, a low hoot like a plaintive owl was heard, and they knew their game was afoot.

Presently, tramp, tramp, came the slow and stately march of him they had hunted down.

He came very slowly, like one lost in meditation; and these amateur policemen's hearts beat louder and louder, as he drew nearer and nearer.

At last in the blackness of the night a shadowy outline was visible; another tramp or two, it was upon them.

Now the cautious Mr. Green had stipulated that the pocket-book should first be felt for, and, if not there, the matter should go no farther. So Edward made a stumble and fell against Mr. Hardie and felt his left breast: the pocket-book was there; — "Yes," he whispered; and Mr. Hardie, in the act of remonstrating at his clumsiness, was pinned behind, and his arms strapped

with wonderful rapidity and dexterity. Then first he seemed to awake to his danger, and uttered a stentorian cry of terror, that rang through the night and made two of his three captors tremble.

"Cut that," said Green sternly, "or you'll get into trouble."

Mr. Hardie lowered his voice directly. "Do not kill me, do not hurt me," he murmured; "I am but a poor man now. Take my little money; it is in my waistcoat pocket; but spare my life. You see I don't resist."

"Come, stash your gab, my lad," said Green, contemptuously, addressing him just as he would any other of the birds he was accustomed to capture. "It's not your stiff that is wanted, but Captain Dodd's."

"Captain Dodd's?" cried the prisoner with a wonderful assumption of innocence.

"Ay, the pocket-book," said Green; "here, this! this!" He tapped on the pocket-book, and instantly the prisoner uttered a cry of agony, and sprang into the road with an agility no one would have thought possible; but Edward and Green soon caught him, and, the doctor joining, they held him, and Green tore his coat open.

The pocket-book was not there. He tore open his waistcoat; it was not in the waistcoat; but it was sewed to his very shirt on the outside.

Green wrenched it away, and bidding the other two go behind the prisoner and look over his shoulder, unseen themselves, slipped the shade of his lantern.

Mr. Hardie had now ceased to struggle and to exclaim; he stood sullen, mute, desperate; while an agitated face peered eagerly over each of his shoulders at the open pocket-book in Green's hands, on which the lantern now poured a narrow but vivid stream of light.

CHAPTER III.

THERE was not a moment to lose, so Green emptied the pocket-book into his hat, and sifted the contents in a turn of the hand, announcing each discovery in a whisper to his excited and peering associates : —

"A lot of receipts."

"Of no use to any one but me," said the prisoner, earnestly.

"Two miniatures ; gold rims, pinchbeck backs."

"They are portraits of my children when young ; Heaven forgive me, I could not give them up to my creditors ; surely, surely, you will not rob me of them."

"Stash your gab," said Mr. Green, roughly. "Here's a guinea, Queen Anne's reign."

"It belonged to my great-grandfather ; take it, but you will let me redeem it ; I will give five pounds for it, poor as I am ; you can leave it on my door-step, and I'll leave the five pounds."

"Stow your gab. Letters ; papers covered with figures. Stay, what is this ? a lot of memoranda."

"They are of the most private and delicate character. Pray do not expose my family misfortunes." And Mr. Hardie, who of late had been gathering composure, showed some signs of agitation ; the two figures glaring over his shoulder shared it, and his remonstrance only made Green examine the papers keenly ; they might contain some clew to the missing money. It proved a miscellaneous record ; the price of stocks at various

days; notes of the official assignee's remarks in going over the books, etc. At last, however, Green's quick eye fell upon a fainter entry in pencil; figures: 1, 4; yes, actually fourteen thousand pounds. "All right," he said: and took the paper close to the lantern, and began to spell it out: —

"'This day Alfred told me to my face I had fourteen thousand pounds of Captain Dodd's. We had an angry discussion. What can he mean? Drs. Wycherley and Osmond, this same day, afflicted me with hints that he is deranged, or partly. I saw no signs of it before. Wrote to my brother entreating him to give me two hundred pounds to replace the sum which I really have wronged this respectable and now most afflicted family of. I had better withdraw'" — here Mr. Hardie interrupted him with sorrowful dignity: "These are mere family matters; if you are a man, respect them."

Green went reading on like fate: "'Better withdraw my opposition to the marriage, or else it seems my own flesh and blood will go about the place blackening my reputation.'"

Mr. Hardie stamped on the ground. "I tell you on my honor as a gentleman there's no money there but my grandfather's guinea. My money is all in my waistcoat pocket, where you *will not* look."

A flutter of uneasiness seemed to come over the detective: he darkened his lantern, and replaced the pocket-book hurriedly in the prisoner's breast, felt him all over in a minute, and, to keep up the farce, robbed him.

"Only eight yellow-boys," said he, contemptuously, to his mates. He then slipped the money back into Hardie's coat pocket, and conducted him to his own gate, tied him to it by the waist, and ordered him not to give the alarm for ten minutes on pain of death.

"I consent," said Mr. Hardie, "and thank you for abstaining from violence."

"All right, my tulip," said Mr. Green, cheerfully; and drew his companions quietly away. But the next moment he began to run, and, making a sudden turn, dived into a street, then into a passage, and so winded and doubled till he got to a small public-house: he used some flash word, and they were shown a private room. "Wait here an hour for me," he whispered; "I must see who liberates him, and whether he is really as innocent as he reads, or we have been countermined by the devil's own tutor."

The unexpected turn the evidence had taken, evidence of their own choosing, too, cleared Mr. Hardie with the unprofessionals. Edward embraced this conclusion as a matter of course, and urged the character of that gentleman's solitary traducer; Alfred was a traitor, and therefore why not a slanderer?

Even Sampson, on the whole, inclined to a similar conclusion.

At this crisis of the discussion a red-haired pedler, with very large whiskers and the remains of a black eye, put his head in, and asked whether Tom Green was there. "No," said the doctor stoutly, not desiring company of this stamp. "Don't know the lad."

The pedler laughed: "There is not many that do know him at all hours; however, he *is* here, sir." And he whipped off the red hair, and wiped off the black eye, and lo! Green *ipse*. He received their compliments on his Protean powers, and told them he had been just a minute too late; Mr. Hardie was gone, and so he had lost the chance of seeing who came to help him, and of hearing the first words that passed between the two: this, he said, was a very great pity; for it would have shown him in one moment whether certain suspicions of

his were correct. Pressed as to what these suspicions were, he begged to be excused saying any more for the present. The doctor, however, would not let him off so, but insisted on his candid opinion.

"Well, sir," said Green, "I never was more puzzled in my life, owing to not being near hand when he was untied. It looks all square, however. There's only one little thing that don't fit somehow."

They both asked in a breath what that was.

"The sovs. were all marked."

They asked how he knew; and had he got them in his pocket to show?

Green uttered a low, chuckling laugh: "What, me fake the beans, now I live on this side the hedge? Never knew a cove to mix his liquors that way but it hurt his health soon or late. No, I took them out of one pocket, and felt of them as I slipped them into the other. Ye see, gents, to do any good on my lay, a man must train his senses as well as his mind: he must have a hare's ear, and a hawk's eye, a bloodhound's nose, and a lady's hand with steel fingers and a silk skin. Now look at that bunch of fives," continued the master; and laid a hand white and soft as a duchess's on the table: "it can put the bracelets on a giant, or find a sharper's nail-mark on the back of the knave of clubs. The beans were marked, which it is a small thing, but it don't fit the rest. Here's an unsuspicious gent took by surprise, in moonlight meditation fancy free, and all his little private family matters found in his innocent bosom quite promiscuous; but his beans marked: that don't dovetail nohow. Gents, did ever you hear of the man that went to the bottom of the bottomless pit to ease his mind? Well, he was the head of my family: I must go to the bottom whether there's one or not. And just now I see but one way."

"And what is that?" inquired both his companions in some alarm.

"Oh, I mustn't threaten it," said Green, "or I shall never have the stomach to do it. But dear me, this boozing ken is a very unfit place for you; you are champagne gents, not dog's nose ones. Now you part, and make tracks for home, one on foot, and one in a fly. You won't see me nor hear of me again, till I've found something fresh."

And so the confederates parted, and Sampson and Edward met at Albion Villa; and Edward told his mother what they had done, and his conviction that Mr. Hardie was innocent, and Alfred a slanderer as well as a traitor: "And indeed," said he, "if we had but stopped to reflect, we should have seen how unlikely the money was not to be lost in the Agra. Why, the *'Tiser* says she went to pieces almost directly she struck. What we ought to have done was, not to listen to Alfred Hardie like fools, but write to Lloyd's like people in their senses. I'll do it this minute, and find out the surviving officers of the ship: they will be able to give us information on that head." Mrs. Dodd approved; and said she would write to her kind correspondent, Mrs. Beresford: and she did sit down to her desk at once. As for Sampson, he returned to town next morning, not quite convinced, but thoroughly staggered; and determined for once to resign his own judgment, and abide the result of Mrs. Dodd's correspondence and Mr. Green's sagacity. All he insisted on was, that his placard about Alfred should be continued: he left money for this, and Edward against the grain consented to see it done. But placards are no monopoly: in the afternoon only a section of Sampson's was visible in most parts of the town by reason of a poster to this effect pasted half over it: —

FIFTY GUINEAS REWARD!

Whereas yesterday evening at ten o'clock Richard Hardie, Esq., of Musgrove Cottage, Barkington, was assaulted at his own door by three ruffians, who rifled his pockets, and read his private memoranda, and committed other acts of violence, the shock of which has laid him on a bed of sickness, the above reward shall be paid to any person, or persons, who will give such information as shall lead to the detection of all or any one of the miscreants concerned in this outrage.

The above reward will be paid by Mr. Thomas Hardie, of Clare Court, Yorkshire.

On this the impartial police came to Mr. Hardie's and made inquiries. He received them in bed, and told them particulars: and they gathered from Peggy that she had heard a cry of distress, and opened the kitchen-door, and that Betty and she had ventured out together, and found poor master tied to the gate with an old cord: this she produced, and the police inspected and took it away with them.

At sight of that notice, Edward felt cold and then hot, and realized the false and perilous position into which he had been betrayed: "So much for being wiser than the law," he said: "what are we now but three foot-pads?" This, and the insult his sister had received, made the place poison to him; and hastened their departure by a day or two: the very next day (Thursday) an affiche on the walls of Albion Villa announced that Mr. Chippenham, auctioner, would sell next Wednesday on the premises the greater part of the furniture, plate, china, glass, Oriental inlaid boxes and screens, with several superb India shawls, scarfs, and dresses; also a twenty-one years' lease of the villa; seventeen to run.

Edward took unfurnished apartments in London, near Russell Square: a locality in which, as he learned from the *'Tiser*, the rooms were large and cheap; he packed

just so much furniture as was essential; no knick-knacks. It was to go by rail on Monday; Mrs. Dodd and Julia were to follow on Tuesday: Edward to stay at Barkington and look after the sale.

Meantime, their secret ally, Mr. Green, was preparing his threatened coup. The more he reflected, the more he suspected that he had been outwitted by Peggy Black; she had led him on, and the pocket-book had been planted for him. If so, why, Peggy was a genius, and in his own line; and he would marry her, and so kill two birds with one stone: make a detective of her (there was a sad lack of female detectives); and, once his wife, she would split on her master, and he should defeat that old soldier at last, and get a handsome slice of the fourteen thousand pounds.

He manœuvred thus: first, he went back to London for a day or two to do other jobs, and to let this matter cool: then he returned, and wrote from a town near Barkington to Peggy Black, telling her he had been sent away suddenly on a job, but his heart had remained behind with his Peggy: would she meet him at the gate at nine that evening? He had something very particular to say to her. As to the nature of the business the enclosed would give her a hint. She might name her own day, and the sooner the better.

The enclosed was a wedding ring.

At nine this extraordinary pair of lovers met at the gate; but Peggy seemed hardly at her ease; said her master would be coming out and catching her; perhaps they had better walk up the road a bit. "With all my heart," said Green; but he could not help a little sneer: "Your master?" said he: "why, he is your servant, as I am. What, is he jealous?"

"I don't know what you mean, young man," said Peggy.

"I'll tell you when we are married."

"La, that is a long time to wait for my answer: why, we ain't asked in church yet."

"There's no need of that; I can afford a special license."

"Lawk a daisy! why, you be a gentleman then."

"No, but I can keep my wife like a lady."

"You sounds very tempting," murmured Peggy, throwing her skirt over her head — for a drizzle was beginning — and walking slower and slower.

Then he made hot love to her, and pressed her hard to name the day.

She coquetted with the question till they came near the mouth of a dark lane, called Lovers' Walk; then, as he insisted on an answer, she hung her head bashfully, and coughed a little cough. At which preconcerted signal a huge policeman sprang out of the lane and collared Mr. Green.

On this Peggy, who was all lie from head to heel, uttered a little scream of dismay and surprise.

Mr. Green laughed.

"Well, you *are* a downy one," said he. "I'll marry you all the more for this."

The detective put his hands suddenly inside the policeman's, caught him by the bosom with his right hand by way of fulcrum; and with his left by the chin, which he forced violently back, and gave him a slight Cornish trip at the same moment; down went the policeman on the back of his head, a fearful crack: Green then caught the astonished Peggy round the neck, kissed her lips violently, and fled like the wind; removed all traces of his personal identity, and up to London by the train in the character of a young swell, with a self-fitting eyeglass and a long mustache the color of his tender mistress's eyebrow: tow.

From town he wrote to her, made her a formal offer of marriage; and gave her an address to write to "should she at any time think more kindly of him and of his sincere affection."

I suppose he specified sincere because it was no longer sincere: he hurled the offer into Musgrove Cottage by way of an apple of discord; at least, so I infer from the memorandum with which he retired at present from the cash-hunt: —

"Mr. Hardie has the stiff, I think; but, if so, it is planted somewhere: doesn't carry it about him; my Peggy is his mistress; nothing to be done till they split."

Victorious so far, Mr. Hardie had still one pressing anxiety: Dr. Sampson's placard. This had been renewed, and stared him everywhere in the face. Every copy of it he encountered made him shiver; if he had been a man of impulse, he would have torn it down wherever he saw it: but he knew that would not do. However, learning from Jane, who had it from old Betty, who had it from Sarah, that Mrs. and Miss Dodd would leave for London the day before the sale, and Edward the day after it, he thought he might venture in the busy intermediate time to take some liberties with it. This he did with excellent tact and judgment; Peggy and a bill-sticker were seen in conference, and, soon after, the huge bills of a travelling circus were pasted right over both the rival advertisements in which the name of Hardie figured. The consequence was, Edward raised no objection. He was full of the sale, for one thing; but I suspect he was content to see his own false move pasted over on such easy terms.

One morning Peggy brought in the letters, and Jane saw one in Alfred's handwriting. She snatched it up, and cried, "Papa, from Alfred!" And she left off

making the tea, while her father opened it with comparative composure.

This coolness, however, did not outlast the perusal. "The young ruffian!" said he; "would you believe it, Jenny, he accuses me of being the cause of his last business!"

"Let me see, papa."

He held her out the letter, but hesitated and drew it back. "My dear, it would give you pain to see your poor father treated so. Here's a specimen: 'What could they expect but that the son of a sharper would prove a traitor? You stole her money; I her affections, of which I am unworthy.' Now, what do you think of that?"

"Unhappy Alfred!" said Jane. "No, papa, I would not read it, if you are insulted in it. But where is he?"

"The letter is dated Paris. See!" And he showed her the date. "But he says here, he is coming back to London directly; and he orders me in the most peremptory way to be ready with my accounts, and pay him over his fortune. Well, he is alive at all events; really, my good, kind, interfering, pragmatical friend Sampson, with his placards, made me feel uneasy, more uneasy than I would own to you, Jenny."

"Unhappy Alfred!" cried Jane, with the tears in her eyes, "and poor papa!"

"Oh, never mind me," said Mr. Hardie; "now that I know no harm has come to him, I really don't care a straw. I have got one child that loves me, and that I love."

"Ah, yes, dear, dear papa, and that will always love you, and never, never, disobey you in small things or great." She rose from the table, and sealed this with a pious kiss; and when she sat down with a pink flush on her delicate cheek, his hard eye melted and dwelt on her

with beaming tenderness. His heart yearned over her, and a pang went through it: to think that he must deceive even her, the one sweet soul that loved him!

It was a passing remorse: the successful plotter soon predominated, and it was with unmixed satisfaction he saw her put on her bonnet directly after breakfast, and hurry off to Albion Villa to play the part of his unconscious sieve.

He himself strolled in the opposite direction, not to seem to be watching her.

He was in good spirits; felt like a general, who, after repulsing many desperate attacks successfully, orders an advance, and sees the tide of battle roll away from his bayonets. His very body seemed elastic, indomitable; he walked lustily out into the country, sniffed the perfumed hedges, and relished life. To be sure he could not walk away from all traces of his misdeeds; he fell in with objects that to an ordinary sinner might have spoiled the walk, and even marred the springtime; he found his creditor Maxley with grizzly beard and bloodshot eyes, belaboring a milestone, and two small boys quizzing him, and pelting him with mud; and soon after, he met his creditor, old Dr. Phillips, in a cart, coming back to Barkington to end his days there at the almshouse. But to our triumphant bankrupt and Machiavel these things were literally nothing; he paced complacently on, and cared no more for either of those his wrecks, than the smiling sea itself seems to care for the dead ships and men it washed ashore a week ago.

He came home before luncheon for his gossip with Jane, but she had not returned. All the better, her budget would be the larger.

To while the time he got his file of the *Times*, and amused himself noting down the fluctuations in Peruvian bonds.

While thus employed he heard a loud knock at his door, and soon after Peggy's voice and a man's in swift collision. Hasty feet came along the passage, the parlor-door opened, and a young man rushed in pale as ashes, and stared at him; he was breathless, and his lips moved, but no sound came.

It was Edward Dodd.

Mr. Hardie rose like a tower and manned himself to repulse this fresh assault.

The strange visitor gasped out, "You are wanted at our house."

CHAPTER IV.

JANE HARDIE had found Albion Villa in a miserable state that precedes an auction: the house raw, its contents higgledy-piggledy. The stair-carpets and drawing-room carpets were up, and in rolls in the dining-room; the bulk of the furniture was there too; the auction was to be in that room. The hall was clogged with great packages, and littered with small, all awaiting the railway carts; and Edward, dusty and deliquescent, was cording, strapping, and nailing them at the gallop, in his shirt-sleeves.

Jane's heart sank at the visible signs of his departure. She sighed, and then, partly to divert his attention, told him hastily there was a letter from Alfred. On this he ran up-stairs, and told Mrs. Dodd; and she came down-stairs, and after a conversation took Jane up softly to her friend's room.

They opened the door gently, and Jane saw the grief she was come to console, or to embitter.

Such a change! instead of the bright, elastic, impetuous young beauty, there sat a pale, languid girl, with "weary of the world" written on every part of her eloquent body; her right hand dangled by her side, and on the ground beneath it lay a piece of work she had been attempting; but it had escaped from those listless fingers: her left arm was stretched at full length on the table with an unspeakable abandon, and her brow laid wearily on it above the elbow. So lies the wounded bird, so droops the broken lily.

She did not move for Jane's light foot. She often sat thus, a drooping statue, and let people come and go unheeded.

Jane's heart yearned for her. She came softly and laid a little hand lightly on her shoulder, and, true to her creed that we must look upward for consolation, said in her ear, and in solemn, silvery tones, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Julia turned at this and flung her arms round Jane's neck, and panted heavily.

Jane kissed her, and, with tears in her eyes, proceeded to pour out, from a memory richly stored with Scripture, those blessed words it is full of, — words that in our hours of ease or biblical criticism pass over the mind like some drowsy chime, but in the bitter day of anguish and bereavement, when the body is racked, the soul darkened, shine out like stars to the mariner; seem then first to swell to their real size and meaning, and come to writhing mortals like pitying seraphim, divinity on their faces and healing on their wings.

Julia sighed heavily. "Ah," she said, "these are sweet words. But I am not ripe for them. You show me the true path of happiness; but I don't *want* to be happy; it's *him* I want to be happy. If the angels came for me and took me to heaven this moment, I should be miserable there, if I thought *he* was in eternal torment; ay, I should be as miserable there as I am here. O Jane, when God means to comfort me, He will show me *he* is alive; till then words are wasted on me, even Bible words."

"Tell her your news, my dear," said Mrs. Dodd, quietly. She was one of those who take human nature as it is, and make the best of it.

"Julia, dear," said Jane, "your fears are extravagant; indeed, Alfred is alive, we know."

Julia trembled, but said nothing.

"He has written to-day."

"Ah! To you?"

"No, to papa."

"I don't believe it. Why to him?"

"But I saw the letter, dear; I had it in my hand."

"Did you read it?" asked Julia, trembling now like an aspen, and fluttering like a bird.

"No, but I read the address, and the date inside, and I saw the handwriting; and I was offered the letter, but papa told me it was full of abuse of him, so I declined [1] to read it; however, I will get it for *you*."

Mrs. Dodd thanked her warmly, but asked her if she could not in the mean time give some idea of the contents.

"Oh, yes, Mrs. Dodd; papa read me out a great deal of it. He was in Paris, but just starting for London, and he demanded his money and his accounts. You know papa is one of his trustees."

"Well, but," said Mrs. Dodd, "was there nothing — nothing about" —

"Oh, yes, there was," said Jane; "only I — well, then, for dear Julia's sake — the letter said, 'What wonder the son of a sharper should prove a traitor? *You* have stolen her money, and *I* her affections, and' — Oh, I can't, I can't." And Jane Hardie began to cry.

Mrs. Dodd embraced her like a mother, and entered into her filial feelings; Mrs. Dodd had never seen her so weak, and therefore never thought her so amiable. Thus occupied they did not at first observe how these tidings were changing Julia.

But presently looking up they saw her standing at her full height, on fire with wrath and insulted pride.

[1] This was one of those involuntary inaccuracies which creep into mortal statements.

"Ah, you have brought me comfort," she cried. "Mamma, I shall hate and scorn this man some day, as much as I hate and scorn myself now for every tear I have shed for him."

They tried to calm her, but in vain; a new gust of passion possessed the ardent young creature, and would have vent. She reddened from bosom to brow, and the scalding tears ran down her flaming cheeks, and she repeated between her clenched teeth, "My veins are not filled with skim-milk, I can tell you; you have seen how I can love, you shall see how I can hate." And with this she went haughtily out of the room, not to expose the passion which overpowered her.

Mrs. Dodd took advantage of her absence to thank Jane for her kindness, and told her she had also received some letters by this morning's post, and thought it would be neither kind on her part nor just to conceal their purport from her. She then read her a letter from Mrs. Beresford and another from Mr. Grey, in answer to queries about the fourteen thousand pounds.

Sharpe, I may as well observe, was at sea; Bayliss, drowned.

Mrs. Beresford knew nothing about the matter.

Mr. Grey was positive Captain Dodd, when in command, had several thousand pounds in his cabin; Mrs. Beresford's Indian servant had been detected trying to steal it, and put in irons; believed the lady had not been told the cause — out of delicacy; and Captain Roberts had liberated him. As to whether the money had escaped the wreck — if on Captain Dodd's person, it might have been saved; but if not, it was certainly lost; for Captain Dodd to his knowledge had run on deck from the passengers' cabin the moment the ship struck, and had remained there till she went to pieces, and everything was washed out of her.

"Our own opinion," said Mrs. Dodd, "I mean Edward's and mine, is now, that the money was lost in the ship; and you can tell your papa so if you like."

Jane thanked her, and said she thought so too, and what a sad thing it was.

Soon after this Julia returned, pale and calm as a statue, and sat down humbly beside Jane. "Oh, pray with me," she said; "pray that I may not hate, for to hate is to be wicked; and pray that I may not love, for to love is to be miserable."

Mrs. Dodd retired with her usual tact and self-denial.

Then Jane Hardie, being alone with her friend, and full of sorrow, sympathy, and faith, found words of eloquence almost divine to raise her.

With these pious consolations Julia's pride and self-respect now co-operated; relieved of her great terror, she felt her insult to her fingers' ends. "I'll never degrade myself so far as to pine for another lady's lover," she said. "I'll resume my duties in another sphere, and try to face the world by degrees. I am not quite alone in it; I have my mother still—and my Redeemer."

Some tears forced their way at these brave, gentle words. Jane gave her time.

Then she said, "Begin by putting on your bonnet, and visiting with me. Come with one who is herself thwarted in the carnal affections; come with her and see how sick some are, and we two in health; how racked with pain some are, and we two at ease; how hungry some, and we have abundance; and, above all, in what spiritual deserts some lie, while we walk in the gospel light."

"Oh, that I had the strength!" said Julia; "I'll try."

She put on her bonnet, and went down with her friend; but at the street-door the strange feeling of

shame overpowered her; she blushed and trembled, and begged to substitute the garden for the road. Jane consented, and said everything must have a beginning.

The fresh air, the bursting buds, and all the face of nature, did Julia good, and she felt it. "You little angel," said she, with something of her old impetuosity, "you have saved me. I was making myself worse by shutting myself up in that one miserable room."

They walked hand-in-hand for a good half-hour, and then Jane said she must go, papa would miss her. Julia was sorry to part with her, and almost without thinking, accompanied her through the house to the front gate, and that was another point gained. "I never was so sorry to part with you, love," said she. "When will you come again? We leave to-morrow. I am selfish to detain you, but it seems as if my guardian angel was leaving me."

Jane smiled. "I must go," said she, "but I'll leave better angels than I am behind me. I leave you this: 'Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.' When it seems most harsh, then it is most loving. Pray for faith to say with me, 'Lead us by a way that we know not.'"

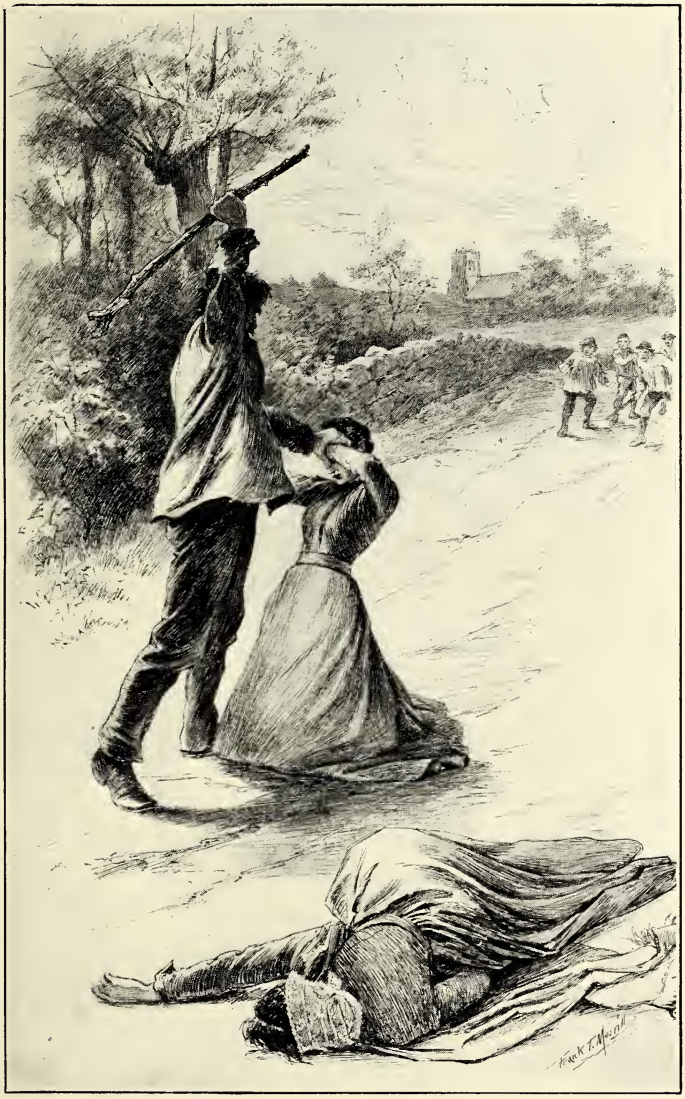
They kissed one another, and Julia stood at the gate and looked lovingly after her, with the tears standing thick in her own violet eyes.

Now Maxley was coming down the road, all grizzly and bloodshot, baited by the boys, who had gradually swelled in number as he drew nearer the town.

Jane was shocked at their heathenish cruelty, and went off the path to remonstrate with them.

On this, Maxley fell upon her, and began beating her about the head and shoulders with his heavy stick.

The miserable boys uttered yells of dismay, but did nothing.



RAISED HIS STAFF HIGH.

Julia uttered a violent scream, but flew to her friend's aid; and crying, "Oh, you wretch! you wretch!" actually caught the man by the throat, and shook him violently; he took his hand off Jane Hardie, who instantly sank moaning on the ground, and he cowered like a cur at the voice and the purple gleaming eyes of the excited girl.

The air filled with cries, and Edward ran out of the house to see what was the matter; but on the spot nobody was game enough to come between the furious man and the fiery girl. The consequence was, her impetuous courage began to flag, and her eye to waver; the demented man found this out by some half-animal instinct, and instantly caught her by the shoulder and whirled her down on her knees, then raised his staff high to destroy her.

She screamed, and was just putting up her hands, woman-like, not to see her death as well as feel it, when something dark came past her like a rushing wind: a blow, that sounded exactly like that of a paving ram, caught Maxley on the jaw; and there was Edward Dodd blowing like a grampus with rage, and Maxley on his back in the road; but men under cerebral excitement are not easily stunned, and know no pain; he bounded off the ground, and came at Edward like a Spanish bull. Edward slipped aside, and caught him another ponderous blow that sent him staggering, and his bludgeon flew out of his hand, and Edward caught it; lo! the maniac flew at him again more fiercely than ever; but the young Hercules had seen Jane bleeding on the ground; he dealt her assailant in full career such a murderous stroke with the bludgeon, that the people who were running from all quarters, shrieked with dismay, not for Jane, but for Maxley, and well they might; that awful stroke laid him senseless, motionless, and mute, in a pool of his own blood.

"Don't kill him, sir, don't kill the man," was the cry.

"Why not?" said Edward, sternly. He then kneeled over his sweetheart, and lifted her in his arms like a child. Her bonnet was all broken, her eyes were turned upwards and set, and a little blood trickled down her cheek, and that cheek seemed streaked white and red.

He was terrified, agonized; yet he gasped out, "You are safe, dear, don't be frightened." She knew the voice.

"O Edward!" she said, piteously and tenderly, and then moaned a little on his broad bosom. He carried her into the house out of the crowd.

Poor old Dr. Phillips, coming in to end his days in the almshouse, had seen it all; he got out of his cart and hobbled up. He had been in the army, and had both experience and skill. He got her bonnet off, and at sight of her head looked very grave.

In a minute a bed was laid in the drawing-room, and all the windows and doors open; and Edward, trembling now in every limb, ran to Musgrove Cottage, while Mrs. Dodd and Julia loosened the poor girl's dress, and bathed her wounds with tepid water (the doctor would not allow cold), and put wine carefully to her lips with a teaspoon.

"Wanted at your house! pray, what for?" said Mr. Hardie, superciliously.

"O sir," said Edward, "such a calamity! Pray come directly. A ruffian has struck her: has hurt her terribly, terribly."

"Her! Who?" asked Mr. Hardie, beginning to be uneasy.

"Who! why, Jane, your daughter, man; and there you sit chattering, instead of coming at once."

Mr. Hardie rose hurriedly and put on his hat, and accompanied him, half confused.

Soon, Edward's mute agitation communicated itself to him, and he went striding and trembling by his side.

The crowd had gone with insensible Maxley to the hospital, but the traces of the terrible combat were there. Where Maxley fell the last time, a bullock seemed to have been slaughtered at the least.

The miserable father came on this, and gave a great scream like a woman, and staggered back white as a sheet.

Edward laid his hand on him, for he seemed scarce able to stand.

"No, no, no," he cried, comprehending the mistake at last; "that is not hers — Heaven forbid! That is the madman's who did it; I knocked him down with his own cudgel."

"God bless you! you've killed him, I hope."

"O sir, be more merciful, and then perhaps He will be merciful to us, and not take this angel from us."

"No, no! you are right, good young man. I little thought I had such a friend in your house."

"Don't deceive yourself, sir," said Edward, "it's not you I care for;" then, with a great cry of anguish, "*I love her.*"

At this blunt declaration, so new and so offensive to him, Mr. Hardie winced, and stopped bewildered.

But they were at the gate, and Edward hurried him on. At the house-door he drew back once more, for he felt a shiver of repugnance at entering this hateful house, of whose happiness he was the destroyer.

But enter it he must; it was his fate.

The wife of the poor captain he had driven mad met him in the passage, her motherly eyes full of tears for him, and both hands held out to him like a pitying angel. "O Mr. Hardie," she said in a broken voice, and took him and led him, wonder-struck, stupefied, shivering with dark fears, to the room where his crushed daughter lay.

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Hardie found his daughter lying ashy pale on a little bed in the drawing-room of Albion Villa. She was now scarce conscious. The old doctor sat at her head, looking very grave; and Julia kneeled over her beloved friend, pale as herself, with hands clasped convulsively, and great eyes of terror and grief.

That vivid young face, full of foreboding and woe, struck Mr. Hardie the moment he entered, and froze his very heart; the strong man quivered, and sank slowly like a felled tree by the bedside; and his face and the poor girl's, whose earthly happiness he had coldly destroyed, nearly met over his crushed daughter.

"Jane, my child," he gasped, "my poor little Jane."

"Oh, let me sleep," she moaned, feebly.

"Darling, it's your own papa," said Julia, softly.

"Poor papa," said she, turning rather to Julia than to him. "Let me sleep."

She was in a half-lethargic state.

Mr. Hardie asked the doctor in an agitated whisper if he might move her home? The doctor shook his head. "Not by my advice; her pulse is scarce perceptible. We must not move her, nor excite her, nor yet let her sink into lethargy. She is in great danger, very great."

At these terrible words Mr. Hardie groaned, and they all began to speak below the breath.

"Edward," murmured Mrs. Dodd, hurriedly, "run and put off the auction: put it off altogether; then go to the railway; nothing must come here to make a noise; and get straw put down directly. Do that first, dear."

"You are kinder to me than I deserve," muttered Mr. Hardie, humbly, quite cowed by the blow that had fallen on him.

The words agitated Mrs. Dodd with many thoughts; but she whispered as calmly as she could, "Let us think of nothing now but this precious life."

Mr. Hardie begged to see the extent of the injury. Mrs. Dodd dissuaded him, but he persisted. Then the doctor showed her poor head.

At that the father uttered a scream and sat quivering. Julia buried her face in the bed-clothes directly, and sobbed vehemently. It passed faintly across the benumbed and shuddering father, "How she loves my child; they all love her;" but the thought made little impression at the time; the mind was too full of terror and woe. The doctor now asked for brandy, in a whisper. Mrs. Dodd left the room with stealthy foot and brought it. He asked for a quill. Julia went with swift, stealthy foot and brought it. With adroit and tender hands they aided the doctor, and trickled stimulants down her throat, then sat like statues of grief about the bed; only every now and then eye sought eye, and endeavored to read what the other thought. Was there hope? Was there none? And by and by, so roving is the mind, especially when the body is still, these statues began to thrill with thoughts of the past as well as the absorbing present.

Ay, here were met a strange party; a stranger, for its size, methinks, never yet met on earth, to mingle their hearts together in one grief.

Just think! Of him who sat there with his face hidden in his hands, and his frame shuddering, all the others were the victims.

Yet the lady whose husband he had robbed and driven mad, pitied and sympathized with him, and he saw it;

the lady whom he had insulted at the altar, and blighted her young heart and life, pitied and sympathized with him; the poor old doctor pitied and sympathized, and was more like an anxious father than a physician.

Even Jane was one of his victims; for she fell by the hand of a man he had dishonestly ruined and driven out of his senses.

Thinking of all he had done, and this the end of it, he was at once crushed and melted.

He saw with awe that a mightier hand than man's was upon him; it had tossed him and his daughter into the house and the arms of the injured Dodds, in defiance of all human calculation; and he felt himself a straw in that hand: so he was, and the great globe itself. Oh, if Jane should die! the one creature he loved, the one creature, bereaved of whom he could get no joy even from riches.

What would he not give to recall the past, since all his schemes had but ended in this! Thus stricken by terror of the Divine wrath, and touched by the goodness and kindness of those he had cruelly wronged, all the man was broken with remorse. Then he vowed to undo his own work as far as possible: he would do anything, everything, if Heaven would spare him his child.

Now it did so happen that these resolves, earnest and sincere but somewhat vague, were soon put to the test; and, as often occurs, what he was called on to do first, was that which he would rather have done last. Thus it was: about five o'clock in the afternoon Jane Hardie opened her eyes and looked about her.

It was a moment of intense anxiety. They all made signals, but held their breath. She smiled at sight of Mr. Hardie, and said, "Papa! dear papa!"

There was great joy: silent on the part of Mrs. Dodd and Julia; but Mr. Hardie, who saw in this a good

omen, Heaven recognizing his penitence, burst out: "She knows me; she speaks; she will live. How good God is! Yes, my darling child, it is your own father. You will be brave and get well for my sake."

Jane did not seem to pay much heed to these words: she looked straight before her like one occupied with her own thought, and said distinctly and solemnly, "Papa — send for Alfred."

It fell on all three like a clap of thunder, those gentle but decided tones, those simple, natural words.

Julia's eyes flashed into her mother's, and then sought the ground directly.

There was a dead silence.

Mr. Hardie was the one to speak. "Why for him, dear? Those who love you best are all here."

"For Heaven's sake don't thwart her, sir," said the doctor in alarm. "This is no time to refuse her anything in your power. Sometimes the very expectation of a beloved person coming keeps them alive; stimulates the powers."

Mr. Hardie was sore perplexed. He recoiled from the sudden exposure that might take place, if Alfred, without any preparation or previous conciliatory measures, were allowed to burst in upon them. And while his mind was whirling within him in doubt and perplexity, Jane spoke again; but no longer calmly and connectedly; she was beginning to wander. Presently in her wandering she spoke of Edward; called him dear Edward. Mrs. Dodd rose hastily, and her first impulse was to ask both gentlemen to retire; so instinctively does a good woman protect her own sex against the other; but, reflecting that this was the father, she made an excuse and retired herself instead, followed by Julia. The doctor divined, and went to the window. The father sat by the bed, and soon gathered his daughter loved Edward Dodd.

The time was gone by when this would have greatly pained him.

He sighed like one overmatched by fate; but said, "You shall have him, my darling; he is a good young man, he shall be your husband; you shall be happy. Only live for my sake, for all our sakes." She paid no attention and wandered on a little; but her mind gradually cleared, and by and by she asked quietly for a glass of water. Mr. Hardie gave it her. She sipped, and he took it from her. She looked at him close and said distinctly, "Have you sent for Alfred?"

"No, love, not yet."

"Not yet? There is no time to lose," she said, gravely.

Mr. Hardie trembled. Then, being alone with her, the miserable man, unable to say no, unwilling to say yes, tried to persuade her not to ask for Alfred. "My dear," he whispered, "I will not refuse you: but I have a secret to confide to you. Will you keep it?"

"Yes, papa, faithfully."

"Poor Alfred is not himself. He has delusions: he is partly insane. My brother Thomas has thought it best for us all to put him under gentle restraint for a time. It would retard his cure to have him down here and subject him to excitement."

"Papa," said Jane, "are you deceiving me, or are you imposed upon? Alfred insane! It is a falsehood. He came to me the night before the wedding that was to be. O my brother, my darling brother, how dare they say you are insane! The letter you showed me then was a falsehood? O papa!"

"I feared to frighten you," said Mr. Hardie, and hung his head.

"I see it all," she cried; "those wicked men with their dark words have imposed on you. Bring him to

me that I may reconcile you all, and end all this misery ere I go hence and be no more seen."

"O my child, don't talk so," cried Mr. Hardie, trembling. "Think of your poor father."

"I do," she cried, "I do. O papa, I lie here between two worlds, and see them both so clear. Trust to me: and, if you love me" —

"If I love you, Jane? better than all the world twice told."

"Then don't refuse me this one favor: the last, perhaps, I shall ever ask you. I want my brother here before it is too late. Tell him he must come to his little sister, who loves him dearly, and — is dying."

"Oh, no! no! no!" cried the agonized father, casting everything to the winds. "I will. He shall be here in twelve hours. Only promise me to bear up. Have a strong will; have courage. You shall have Alfred, you shall have anything you like on earth, anything that money can get you. What am I saying? I have no money; it is all gone. But I have a father's heart. Madam, Mrs. Dodd!" She came directly.

"Can you give me paper? No, I won't trust to a letter. I'll send off a special messenger this moment. It is for my son, madam. He will be here to-morrow morning. God knows how it will all end. But how can I refuse my dying child? O madam, you are good, kind, forgiving; keep my poor girl alive for me: keep telling her Alfred is coming; she cares more for him than for her poor, heart-broken father."

And the miserable man rushed out, leaving Mrs. Dodd in tears for him.

He was no sooner gone than Julia came in; and clasped her mother, and trembled on her bosom. Then Mrs. Dodd knew she had overheard Mr. Hardie's last words.

Jane Hardie, too, though much exhausted by the scene with her father, put out her hand to Julia, and took hers, and said feebly, but with a sweet smile, "He is coming, love; all shall be well." Then to herself as it were, and looking up with a gentle rapture in her pale face, —

"Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."

On this thought she seemed to feed with innocent joy; but for a long time was too weak to speak again.

Mr. Hardie, rushing from the house, found Edward at work outside; he was crying undisguisedly, and with his coat off, working harder at spreading the straw than both the two men together he had got to help him. Mr. Hardie took his hand and wrung it, but could not speak.

In half an hour a trusty agent he had often employed was at the station waiting for the up train, nearly due.

He came back to Albion Villa. Julia met him on the stairs with her finger to her lips. "She is sleeping; the doctor has hopes. O sir, let us all pray for her day and night."

Mr. Hardie blessed her; it seemed the face of an angel, so earnest, so lovely, so pious. He went home: and at the door of his own house Peggy met him with anxious looks. He told her what he had done.

"Good heavens!" said she: "have you forgotten? He says he will kill you the first day he gets out. You told me so yourself."

"Yes, Baker said so. I can't help it. I don't care what becomes of me; I care only for my child. Leave me, Peggy; there, go, go!"

He was no sooner alone than he fell upon his knees, and offered the Great Author of life and death — a bargain. "O God," he cried, "I own my sins and I repent them. Spare but my child, who never sinned against Thee, and I will undo all I have done amiss in Thy

sight. I will refund that money on which Thy curse lies. I will throw myself on their mercy. I will set my son free. I will live on a pittance. I will part with Peggy. I will serve Mammon no more. I will attend Thine ordinances. I will live soberly, honestly, and godly all the remainder of my days; only do Thou spare my child. She is Thy servant, and does Thy work on earth, and there is nothing on earth I love but her."

And now the whistle sounded, the train moved, and his messenger was flying fast to London, with a note to Dr. Wycherley: —

DEAR SIR, — My poor daughter lies dangerously wounded, and perhaps at the point of death. She cries for her brother. He must come down to us instantly with the bearer of this. Send one of your people with him, if you like. But it is not necessary. I enclose a blank check, signed, which please fill at your discretion.

I am, with thanks, yours in deep distress,

RICHARD HARDIE.

CHAPTER VI.

Dr. Short arrived, approved Dr. Phillips's treatment, and said the case was severe but not hopeless, and he would call again. A bed was prepared in the house for Mr. Hardie: but neither he nor any of the Dodds closed an eye that sorrowful night.

About midnight, after a short slumber, the sufferer became uneasy, and begged to be left with Julia. Julia was sent for, and found her a good deal excited. She inquired more than once if they were quite alone, and then asked for paper and a pencil. She wrote a few lines, and made Julia put them in a cover and seal them. "Now, dear friend," she said, "promise me not to open this, nor even to let your mother; it is not for your happiness that what I have written should be seen by her or you; no, no, much better not. Come; dear friend, pledge me your honor." Julia pledged her honor.

Then Jane wrote on the cover, "From a dying sister." Julia saw that; and wept sore.

Jane comforted her. "Do not weep for me, love; I am content to go, or stay. This is not my doing; so I know it must be for the best. He is leading me by a way that I know not. O my beloved friend, how sweet it is to lie in His hands, and know no will but His. Ay, I thank Him for crossing my will, and leading him to Himself by His own good way, and not by poor blind, foolish mine."

In this spirit of full resignation she abode constant, and consoled her weeping friends from time to time, whenever she was quite herself.

About daybreak, being alone with her father, she shed a few tears at his lonely condition. "I fear you will miss me," said she. "Take my advice, dear; be reconciled with Alfred at once, and let Julia be your daughter, since I am leaving you. She is all humility and heart. Dying, I prize her and her affection more highly; I seem to see characters clearer, all things clearer than I did before my summons came."

The miserable father tried to be playful and scold her. "You must not talk nor think of death," he said. "Your bridal-day is to come first; I know all; Edward Dodd has told me he loves you. He is a fine, noble fellow: you shall marry him: I wish it. Now, for his sake, summon all your resolution, and make up your mind to live. Why, at your age, it needs but to say, 'I will live, I will, I will;' and when all the prospect is so smiling, when love awaits you at the altar, and on every side! If you could leave your poor doting father, do not leave your lover: and here he is with his mother crying for you. Let me comfort him; let me tell him you will live for his sake and mine."

Even this could not disturb the dying Christian. "Dear Edward," she said; "it is sweet to know he loves me. Ah, well, he is young; he must live without me till I become but a tender memory of his youth. And oh, I pray for him that he may cherish the words I have spoken to him for his soul's good, far longer than he can remember these features, that are hastening to decay."

At ten in the morning Mr. Hardie's messenger returned without Alfred, and with a note from Dr. Wycherley to this effect, that, the order for Alfred's admission into his asylum being signed by Mr. Thomas Hardie, he could not send him out even for a day except on Thomas Hardie's authority; it would be a violation of the law. Under the circumstances, however, he thought he might

venture to receive that order by telegraph. If then Mr. Hardie would telegraph Thomas Hardie in Yorkshire to telegraph him (Wycherley), Alfred should be sent with two keepers wherever Mr. T. Hardie should so direct.

Now Mr. Hardie had already repented of sending for Alfred at all. So, instead of telegraphing Yorkshire, he remained passive, and said sullenly to Mrs. Dodd, "Alfred can't come, it seems."

Thus routine kept the brother from his dying sister.

They told Jane, with aching hearts, there was reason to fear Alfred could not arrive that day.

She only gave a meaning look at Julia, about the paper; and then she said with a little sigh, "God's will be done."

This was the last disappointment Heaven allowed earth to inflict on her: and the shield of faith turned its edge.

One hour of pain, another of delirium, and now the clouds that darken this mortal life seemed to part and pass, and heaven to open full upon her. She spoke of her coming change no longer with resignation; it was with rapture. "Oh!" she cried, "to think that from this very day I shall never sin again, shall never again offend Him by unholy temper, by un-Christlike behavior!"

The strong and healthy wept and groaned aloud; but she they sorrowed for was all celestial bliss. In her lifetime she had her ups and downs of religious fervor; was not without feverish heats, and cold misgivings and depression; but all these fled at that dread hour when the wicked are a prey to dark misgivings, or escape into apathy. This timid girl, that would have screamed at a scratch, met the King of Terrors with smiles and triumph. For her the grave was Jordan, and death was but the iron gate of life everlasting. *Mors janua vitæ.* Yet once or twice she took herself to task: but only to show she knew what the All-Pure had forgiven her. "I often was wanting in humility," she said: "I almost

think that if I were to be sent back again into this world of sin and sorrow I am leaving behind, I should grow a little in humility; for I know the ripe Christian is like the ripe corn, holds his head lower than when he was green; and the grave it seems to be ripening *me*. But what does it matter? since He who died for me is content to take me as I am. Come quickly, Lord Jesus, oh, come quickly! Relieve Thy servant from the burden of the flesh, and of the sins and foibles that cling to it and keep her these many years from Thee."

This prayer was granted; the body failed more and more; she could not swallow even a drop of wine; she could not even praise her Redeemer: that is to say, she could not speak. Yet she lay and triumphed. With hands put together in prayer, and eyes full of praise and joy unspeakable, she climbed fast to God. While she so mounted in the spirit, her breath came at intervals unusually long, and all were sent for to see death conquer the body and be conquered by the soul.

At last, after an unnaturally long interval, she drew a breath like a sigh. They waited for another; waited, waited in vain.

She had calmly ceased to live.

The old doctor laid down her hand reverently, and said, "She is with us no more." Then with many tears, "Oh, may we all meet where she is now, and may I go to her the first!"

Richard Hardie was led from the room in a stupor.

Immediately after death all the disfiguring effect of pain retired, and the happy soul seemed to have stamped its own celestial rapture on the countenance at the moment of leaving it; a rapture so wonderful, so divine, so more than mortal calm, irradiated the dead face. The good Christians she left behind her looked on and feared to weep, lest they should offend Him who had

taken her to Himself, and set a visible seal upon the house of clay that had held her. "O mamma," cried Julia with fervor, "look! look! Can we, dare we, wish that angel back to this world of misery and sin?" And it was some hours before she cooled, and began to hang on Edward's neck and weep his loss and hers, as weep we mortals must, though the angels of heaven are rejoicing.

Thus died in the flower of her youth, and by what we call a violent death, the one child Richard Hardie loved; member of a religious party whose diction now and then offends one to the soul: but the root of the matter is in them; allowance made for those passions, foibles, and infirmities of the flesh, even you and I are not entirely free from, they live fearing God; and die loving Him.

There was an inquest next day, followed in due course by a public trial of James Maxley. But these are matters which, though rather curious and interesting, must be omitted, or touched hereafter and briefly.

The effect of Jane's death on Richard Hardie was deplorable. He saw the hand of Heaven, but did not bow to it: so it filled him with rage, rebellion, and despair. He got his daughter away and hid himself in the room with her; scarce stirring out by night or day. He spoke to no one; he shunned the Dodds: he hated them. He said it was through visiting their house she had met her death, and at their door. He would not let himself see it was he who had sent her there with his lie. He loathed Alfred, calling him the cause of all.

He asked nobody to the funeral: and when Edward begged permission to come, he gave a snarl like a wild beast and went raging from him. But Edward *would* go: and at the grave-side pitying Heaven relieved the young fellow's choking heart with tears: but no such dew came to that parched old man, who stood on its other side like the withered Archangel, his eyes gloomy and wild, his

white cheek ploughed deep with care and crime and anguish, his lofty figure bowed by his long warfare, his soul burning and sickening by turns, with hatred and rebellion, with desolation and despair.

He went home and made his will; for he felt life hang on him like lead, and that any moment he might kill himself to be rid of it. Strange to say, he left a sum of money to Edward Dodd. A moment before, he didn't know he was going to do it: a moment after, he was half surprised he had done it, and minded to undo it; but would not take the trouble. He went up to London, and dashed into speculation as some in their despair take to drink. For this man had but two passions: avarice, and his love for his daughter. Bereaved of her, he must either die, or live for gain. He sought the very cave of Mammon; he plunged into the Stock Exchange.

When Mr. Hardie said, "Alfred can't come, it seems," Mrs. Dodd misunderstood him, naturally enough. She thought the heartless young man had sent some excuse; had chosen to let his sister die neglected rather than face Julia: "As if she would leave her own room while *he* was in my house," said Mrs. Dodd, with sovereign contempt. From this moment she conceived a horror of the young man. Edward shared it fully, and the pair always spoke of him under the title of "the wretch;" this was when Julia was not by. In her presence he was never mentioned. By this means she would in time forget him, or else see him as they saw him.

And as, after all, they knew little to Mr. Hardie's disadvantage, except what had come out of "the wretch's" mouth, and as moreover their hearts were softened towards the father by his bereavement, and their sight of his misery, and also by his grateful words, they quite acquitted him of having robbed them, and felt sure the fourteen thousand pounds was at the bottom of the sea.

They were a little surprised that Mr. Hardie never spoke nor wrote to them again; but being high-minded and sweet-tempered, they set it down to all-absorbing grief, and would not feel sore about it.

And now they must leave the little villa where they had been so happy, and so unhappy.

The scanty furniture went first; Mrs. Dodd followed, and arranged it in their apartments. Julia would stay behind to comfort Edward, inconsolable herself. The auction came off. Most of the things went for cruelly little money compared to their value: and with the balance the sad young pair came up to London, and were clasped in their mother's arms. The tears were in her tender eyes. "It is a poor place to receive my treasures," she said: Edward looked round astonished. "It was a poor place," said he, "but you have made a little palace of it, somehow or another."

"My children's love can alone do that," replied Mrs. Dodd, kissing them both again.

Next day they consulted together how they were to live. Edward wished to try and get his father into a public asylum; then his mother would have a balance to live upon out of her income. But Mrs. Dodd rejected this proposal with astonishment. In vain Edward cited the *'Tiser* that public asylums are patterns of comfort, and cure twice as many patients as the private ones do. She was deaf alike to the *'Tiser* and to statistics. "Do not argue me out of my common-sense," said she. "My husband, your father, in a public asylum, where anybody can go and stare at my darling!"

She then informed them she had written to her Aunt Bazalgette and her Uncle Fountain, and invited them to contribute something towards David's maintenance.

Edward was almost angry at this. "Fancy asking favors of *them!*" said he.

"Oh, I must not sacrifice my family to false pride," said Mrs. Dodd; "besides, they are entitled to know."

While waiting for their answers, a word about the parties and their niece.

Our Mrs. Dodd, born Lucy Fountain, was left at nineteen to the care of two guardians: 1, her Uncle Fountain, an old bachelor, who loved comfort, pedigree, and his own way; 2, her Aunt Bazalgette, who loved flirting, dressing, and her own way; both charming people, when they got their own way; verjuice, when they didn't: and, to conclude, egotists deep as ocean. From guardians they grew match-makers and rivals by proxy: Uncle schemed to graft Lucy on to a stick called Talboys, that came in with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, known in pedigrees as "the Norman Conquest." Aunt, wife of a merchant of no descent, except from a high stool, devoted her to Richard Hardie. An unlooked-for obstacle encountered both: Lucy was not amorous. She loved these two egotists, and their quadrupeds; but there she stopped dead short. They persisted; and, while they pulled her to and fro and ruffled her native calm, David Dodd, first mate of the something or other East Indiaman — brown cheek, honest speech, heart of gold — fell deep in love and worshipped her at a distance. His timidity and social insignificance made him harmless; so egotist Fountain had him to dessert to spin yarns; egotist Bazalgette invited him to her house to flirt with. At this latter place he found Hardie and Talboys both courting Lucy; this drove him mad, and in his fury he popped. Lucy declined him *secundum artem:* he went away blessing her, with a manly sob or two. Lucy cried a little and took a feminine spite against his rivals, who remained to pester her. Now Talboys, spurred by uncle, had often all but popped; only some let, hinderance, or just impediment had still interposed: once her pony

kept prancing at each effort he made towards Hymen; they do say the subtle virgin kept probing the brute with a hair-pin, and made him caracole and spill the treacle as fast as it came her way. However, now Talboys elected to pop by sea. It was the element his ancestors had invaded fair England by; and on its tranquil bosom a lover is safe from prancing steeds, and the myriad anti-pops of terra firma. Miss Lucy consented to the water excursion demurely, designing to bring her sickly wooer to the point and so get rid of him for ever and ever. Plot and counter-plot were baffled by the elements: there came an anti-pop out of the south-west called a gale. Talboys boated so skilfully that he and his intended would have been united without ceremony by Father Nep, at the bottom of the British Channel, but for David Dodd, who was hovering near in jealous anguish and a cutter. He saved them both, but in the doing of it missed his ship, and professional ruin faced him. Then good-hearted Lucy was miserable, and appealed to Mr. Bazalgette, and he managed somehow to get David made captain of the Rajah. The poor girl thought she had squared the account with David; but he refused the ship unless she would go halves, and while her egotists bullied and vexed her, he wrought so upon her pity, and teased her so, that to get rid of his importunity she married him. In time she learned to love him ten times better than if she had begun all flames. Uncle and aunt cut her tolerably dead for some years; uncle came round the first; some antiquarian showed him that Dodd was a much more ancient family than Talboys. "Why, sir, they were lords of sixteen manors under the Heptarchy, and hold some of them to this day." Mrs. Bazalgette, too, had long corresponded with her periodically, and on friendly terms.

The answers came on the same day, curiously enough.

Uncle Fountain, ruined by railway speculation, was living on an allowance from creditors; but his house was at their service if they liked to live with him — and board themselves.

Mrs. Bazalgette's was the letter of a smooth woman, who has hoarded imperishable spite. She reminded her niece after all these years, that her marriage with David was an act of disobedience and ingratitude. She then enumerated her own heavy expenses, all but the four hundred pounds a year she spent in bedizening her carcass, and finally, amidst a multitude of petty insults, she offered to relieve Mrs. Dodd of — Julia. Now Poetry has reconciled us to an asp in a basket of figs; but here was a scorpion in a bundle of nettles. Poor Mrs. Dodd could not speak after reading it. She handed it to Edward, and laid her white forehead wearily in her hand. Edward put the letter in an envelope, and sent it back with a line in his own hand declining all further correspondence with the writer.

"Now then, ladies," said he, "don't you be cast down. Let this be a warning to us, never to ask favors of anybody. Let us look the thing in the face; we must work or starve: and all the better for us. Hard work suits heavy hearts. Come, have you any plan?"

"To be sure we have," said Julia, eagerly. "I mean to go for a governess, and then I shall cost mamma nothing, and, besides, I can send her the money the people give me."

"A pretty plan!" said Edward, sadly; "what! we three part company? Don't you feel lonely enough without that? I do, then. How can we bear our burdens at all, if we are not to be all together to cheer one another along the weary road? What! are we to break up? Is it not enough to be bereaved?"

He could say no more for the emotion his own words

caused him; thinking of Jane, he broke down altogether, and ran out of the room.

However, he came back in an hour with his eyes red, but his heart indomitable; determined to play a man's part for all their sakes. "You ladies," said he, with something of his old genial way, that sounded so strange to one looking at his red eyes, and inspired a desire to hug him, "are full of talent, but empty of invention. The moment you are ruined, or that sort of thing, it is *go* for a governess, *go* for a companion, *go* here, *go* there, in search of what? Independence? No; dependence. Besides, all this *going* is bosh. Families are strong if they stick together, and if they go to pieces they are weak. I learned one bit of sense out of that mass of folly they call antiquity; and that was the story of the old bloke with his twelve sons, and fagot to match. 'Break 'em apart,' he said; and each son broke his stick as easy as shelling peas. 'Now break the twelve all tied together:' devil a bit could the duffers break it then. Now we are not twelve, we are but three: easy to break one or two of us apart, but not the lot together. No; nothing but death shall break this fagot, for nothing less shall part us three."

He stood like a Colossus, and held out his hands to them; they clung round his neck in a moment, as if to illustrate his words; clung tight, and blessed him for standing so firm and forbidding them to part.

Mrs. Dodd sighed, after the first burst of enthusiastic affection, and said, "If he would only go a step further and tell us what to do in company."

"Ay, there it is," said Julia. "Begin with me. What can I do?"

"Why, paint."

"What, to sell? Oh, dear, my daubs are not good enough for that."

"Stuff! Nothing is too bad to *sell.*"

"I really think you might," said Mrs. Dodd; "and I will help you."

"No, no, mamma, I want you for something better than the fine arts. You must go in one of the great grooves: female vanity. You must be a dressmaker; you are a genius at it."

"My mamma a dressmaker," cried Julia. "O Edward! how can you? How dare you? Poor, poor mamma!"

"Do not be so impetuous, dear. I think he is right. Yes; it is all I am fit for. If ever there was a heaven-born dressmaker, it's me."

"As for myself," said Edward, "I shall look out for some business in which physical strength goes further than intellectual attainments. Luckily there are plenty such. Breaking stones is one. But I shall try a few others first."

It is easy to settle on a business, hard to get a footing in one. Edward, convinced that the dressmaking was their best card, searched that mine of various knowledge, the *'Tiser*, for an opening; but none came. At last, one of those great miscellaneous houses in the city advertised for a lady to cut cloaks. He proposed to his mother to go with him. She shrank from encountering strangers. No; she would go to a fashionable dressmaker she had employed some years, and ask her advice. Perhaps Madame Blanch would find her something to do. "I have more faith in the *'Tiser*," said Edward, clinging to his idol.

Mrs. Dodd found Madame Blanch occupied in trying to suit one of those heart-breaking idiots, to whom dress is the one great thing, and all things else, sin included, the little ones. She had tried on a scarf three times; and it discontented her when on, and spoiled all else when off. Mrs. Dodd saw, and said obligingly, "Perhaps

were I to put it on, you could judge better." Mrs. Dodd, you must know, had an admirable art of putting on a shawl or scarf. With apparent nonchalance she settled the scarf on her shapely shoulders so happily, that the fish bit, and the scarf went into its carriage; forty guineas, or so. Madame cast a rapid but ardent glance of gratitude Dodd-wards. The customer began to go, and after fidgeting to the door and back for twenty minutes, actually went somehow. Then madame turned round, and said, "I'm sure, ma'am, I am much obliged to you; you sold me that scarf; and it is a pity we couldn't put her on your bust and shoulders, ma'am, then perhaps a scarf might please her. What can I do for you, ma'am?"

Mrs. Dodd blushed, and with subdued agitation told Madame Blanch that this time she was come not to purchase but to ask a favor. Misfortune was heavy on her, and, though not penniless, she was so reduced by her husband's illness and the loss of fourteen thousand pounds by shipwreck, that she must employ what little talents she had to support her family.

The woman explored her from head to foot to find the change of fortune in some corner of her raiment, but her customer was as well, though plainly, dressed as ever, and still looked an easy-going duchess.

"Could Madame Blanch find her employment in her own line? What talent I have," said Mrs. Dodd, humbly, "lies in that way. I could not cut as well as yourself, of course; but I think I can as well as some of your people."

"That I'll be bound you can," said Madame Blanch, dryly. "But dear, dear, to think of your having come down so. Have a glass of wine to cheer you a bit, do now, that is a good soul."

"Oh, no, madam. I thank you, but wine cannot cheer

me; a little bit of good news to take back to my anxious children, that would cheer me, madam. *Will* you be so good?"

The dressmaker colored and hesitated; she felt the fascination of dignity donning humility and speaking music, but she resisted. "It won't do, at least here. I shouldn't be mistress in my own place. I couldn't drive you like I am forced to do the rest; and then, I should be sure to favor you, being a real lady, which is my taste, and you always will be, rich or poor; and then, all my ladies would be on the bile with jealousy."

"Ah, madam," sighed Mrs. Dodd, "you treat me like a child; you give me sweetmeats, and refuse me food for my family."

"No, no," said the woman, hastily; "I don't say I mightn't send you out some work to do at home."

"Oh, thank you, madam." N.B. — The dressmaker had dropped the madam, so the lady used it now at every word.

"Now stop a bit," said Madame Blanch. "I know a firm that's in want. Theirs is easy work by mine, and they cut up a piece of stuff every two or three days." She then wrote on one of her own cards, Messrs. Cross, Fitchett, Copland, and Tylee, 11, 12, 13, and 14 Primrose Lane, City. "Say I recommend you. To tell the truth, an old hand of my own was to come here this very morning about it, but she hasn't kept her time: so this will learn her business doesn't stand still for lie-abeds to catch it."

Mrs. Dodd put the card in her bosom and pressed the hand extended to her by Madame Zaire Blanch, whose name was Sally White, spinster. She went back to her children and showed them the card, and sank gracefully into a chair, exhausted as much by the agitation of asking favors as by the walk. "Cross, Fitchett, Copland?

Why, they were in the '*Tiser* yesterday," said Edward; "look at this; a day lost by being wiser than the '*Tiser*."

"I'll waste no more, then," said Mrs. Dodd, rising quietly from the chair. They begged her to rest herself first. No, she would not. "I saw this lost by half an hour," said she. "Succeed or fail, I will have no remissness to reproach myself with." And she glided off, in her quiet way, to encounter Cross, Fitchett, Copland, and Tylee, in the lane where a primrose was caught growing — six hundred years ago. She declined Edward's company rather peremptorily. "Stay and comfort your sister," said she. But that was a blind; the truth was, she could not bear her children to mingle in what she was doing. No, her ambition was to ply the scissors and thimble vigorously, and so enable them to be ladies and gentlemen at large. She being gone, Julia made a parcel of water-color drawings, and sallied forth all on fire to sell them. But, while she was dressing, Edward started on a cruise in search of employment. He failed entirely. They met in the evening, Mrs. Dodd resigned, Edward dogged, Julia rather excited. "Now, let us tell our adventures," she said. "As for me, shop after shop declined my poor sketches. They all wanted something about as good, only a little different; nobody complained of the grand fault, and that is their utter badness. At last, one old gentleman examined them, and oh! he was so fat; there, round. And he twisted his mouth *so* (imitating him), and squinted into them *so;* then I was full of hope, and said to myself, 'Dear mamma and Edward!' And so, when he ended by saying 'No,' like all the rest, I burst out crying like a goose."

"My poor girl," cried Mrs. Dodd, with tears in her own eyes, "why expose yourself to these cruel rebuffs?"

"Oh, don't waste your pity, mamma; those great babyish tears were a happy thought of mine; he bought

two directly to pacify me; and there's the money. Thirty shillings!" And she laid it proudly on the table.

"The old cheat," said Edward; "they were worth two guineas apiece, I know."

"Not they, or why would not anybody else give twopence for them?"

"Because pictures are a drug."

He added that even talent was not salable unless it got into the great grooves, and then looked at Mrs. Dodd; she replied that unfortunately those grooves were not always accessible. The City firm had received her stiffly, and inquired for whom she had worked. "Children, my heart fell at that question. I was obliged to own myself an amateur and beg a trial. However, I gave Madame Blanch's card; but Mr. — I don't know which partner it was — said he was not acquainted with her; then he looked a little embarrassed, I thought, and said the firm did not care to send its stuff to ladies not in the business; I might cut it to waste or — He said no more; but I do really think he meant I might purloin it."

"Why wasn't I there to look him into the earth? O mamma! that you should be subjected to all this!"

"Be quiet, child; I had only to put on my armor; and do you know what my armor is? Thinking of my children. So I put on my armor, and said quietly, we were not so poor but we could pay for a piece of cloth, should I be so unfortunate as to *spoil* it; and I offered in plain terms to deposit the price as security. But he turned as stiff at that as his yard measure; 'That was not Cross and Co.'s way of doing business,' he said. But it is unreasonable to be dejected at a repulse or two; and I am not out of spirits, not much;" with this her gentle mouth smiled, and her patient eyes were moist.

The next day, just after breakfast, was announced a

gentleman from the city. He made his bow and produced a parcel which proved to be a pattern cloak. "Order, ladies," said he, briskly, "from Cross, Fitchett, & Co., Primrose Lane. Porter outside with the piece. You can come in, sir." Porter entered with a bale. "Please sign this, ma'am." Mrs. Dodd signed a receipt for the stuff, with an undertaking to deliver it in cloaks at 11 Primrose Lane, in such a time. Porter retreated. The other said, "Our Mr. Fitchett wishes you to observe this fall in the pattern. It is new."

"I will, sir. Am I to trouble you with any money — by way of deposit, sir?"

"No orders about it, ma'am. Ladies, your most obedient. Good-morning, sir."

And he was away.

All this seemed like a click or two of city clock-work: followed by rural silence. Yet in that minute commerce had walked in upon genteel poverty, and left honest labor and modest income behind her.

Great was the thankfulness, strange and new the excitement. Edward was employed to set up a very long deal table for his mother to work on, Julia to go and buy tailors' scissors. Calculations were made how to cut the stuff to advantage, and in due course the heavy scissors were heard snick, snick, snicking all day long.

Julia painted zealously, and Edward, without saying a word to them, walked twenty miles a day hunting for a guinea a week; and finding it not. Not but what employment was often bobbed before his eyes: but there was no grasping it. At last he heard of a place peculiarly suited to him; a packing foreman's in a warehouse at Southwark; he went there, and was referred to Mr. A.'s private house. Mr. A. was in the country for a day. Try Mr. B. Mr. B. was dining with the Lord Mayor. Returning belated, he fell in with a fire; and, sad to say,

life was in jeopardy: a little old man had run out at the first alarm, when there was no danger, and, as soon as the fire was hot, had run in again for his stockings, or some such treasure. Fire does put out some people's reason; clean. While he was rummaging madly, the staircase caught, and the smoke cut off his second exit, and drove him up to a little staircase window at the side of the house. Here he stood, hose in hand, scorching behind and screeching in front. A ladder had been brought: but it was a yard short: and the poor old man danced on the window-ledge and dared not come down to a gallant fireman who stood ready to receive him at great personal peril. In the midst of shrieks and cries and shouts of encouragement, Edward, a practised gymnast, saw a chance. He ran up the ladder like a cat, begged the fireman to clasp it tight; then got on his shoulders and managed to grasp the window-sill: he could always draw his own weight up by his hands: so he soon had his knee on the sill, and presently stood erect. He then put his left arm inside the window, collared the old fellow with his right, and, half persuasion, half force, actually lowered him to the ladder with one herculean arm amidst a roar that made the borough ring; such a strain could not be long endured; but the fireman speedily relieved him by seizing the old fellow's feet and directing them on to the ladder, and so, propping him by the waist, went down before him, and landed him safe. Edward waited till they were down: then begged them to hold the ladder tight below; he hung from the ledge, got his eye well on the ladder below him, let himself quietly drop, and caught hold of it with hands of iron, and twisting round came down the ladder on the inside hand over head without using his feet, a favorite gymnastic exercise of his learnt at the Modern Athens. He was warmly received by the crowd and by the firemen. "You should

be one of us, sir," said a fine young fellow who had cheered him and advised him all through. "I wish to Heaven I was," said Edward: the other thought he was joking, but laughed and said, "Then you should talk to our head man after the business: there is a vacancy, you know."

Edward saw the fire out, and rode home on the engine. There he applied to the head man for the vacancy.

"You are a stranger to me, sir," said the head man. "And I am sure it is no place for you; you are a gentleman."

"Well; is there anything ungentlemanly in saving people's lives and property?"

"Hear! hear!" said a comic fireman.

The compliment began to tell, though. Others put in their word. "Why, Mr. Baldwin, if a gentleman ain't ashamed of us, why should we be ashamed of him?"

"Where will ye get a better?" asked another; and added, "He is no stranger; we've seen him work."

"Stop a bit," said the comic fireman: "what does the dog say? just call him, sir, if you please; his name is Charlie."

Edward called the fire-dog kindly; he came and fawned on him; then gravely snuffed him all round, and retired wagging his tail gently, as much as to say, "I was rather taken by surprise at first, but, on the whole, I see no reason to recall my judgment."

"It is all right," said the firemen in chorus; and one that had not yet spoken to Edward now whispered him mysteriously, "Ye see that there dog he knows more than we do."

After the dog, a biped oracle at headquarters was communicated with, and late that very night Edward was actually enrolled a fireman; and went home warmer at heart than he had been for some time. They were all

in bed; and when he came down in the morning, Julia was reading out of the *'Tiser* a spirited and magniloquent description of a fire in Southwark, and of the heroism displayed by a young gentleman unknown, but whose name the writer hoped at so much the line would never be allowed to pass into oblivion, and be forgotten. In short, the *'Tiser* paid him in one column for years of devotion. Now Edward, of course, was going to relate his adventure; but the journal told it so gloriously, he hesitated to say, "I did all that." He just sat and stared, and wondered, and blushed, and grinned like an imbecile.

Unfortunately, looks seldom escaped the Doddesses. "What is that for?" inquired Julia, reproachfully. "Is that sheepish face the thing to wear when a sister is reading out an heroic action? Ah, these are the things that make one long to be a man, to do them. What *are* you thinking about, dear?"

"Well, I am thinking the *'Tiser* is pitching it rather strong."

"My love, what an expression!"

"Well, then, to be honest, I agree with you that it is a jolly thing to fight with fire and save men's lives; and I am glad you see it in that light, for now you will approve the step I have taken. Ladies, I have put myself in the way of doing this sort of thing every week of my life. I'm a fireman."

"You are jesting, I trust?" said Mrs. Dodd, anxiously.

"No, mamma. I got the place late last night, and I'm to enter on my duties and put on the livery next Monday. Hurrah!"

Instantly the admirers of fiery heroes at a distance overflowed with grief and mortification at the prospect of one in their own family. They could not speak at all at first, and when they did it was only "Cruel! cruel!" from Julia, and "Our humiliation is now complete," from Mrs. Dodd.

They soon dashed Edward's spirits, and made him unhappy, but they could not convince him he had done wrong. However, in the heat of remonstrance, they let out at last that they had just begun to hope by dint of scissors and paint-brush to send him back to Oxford. He also detected, under a cloud of tender, loving, soothing, coaxing, and equivocating expressions, their idea of a man: to wit, a tall, strong, ornamental creature, whom the women were to cocker up, and pet, and slave for, and be rewarded by basking, dead tired, in an imperial smile or two let fall by their sovereign *protégé* from his arm-chair. And, in fact, good women have often demoralized their idols down to the dirt by this process; to be sure, their idols were sorryish clay, to begin.

Edward was anything but flowery, so he paraded no manly sentiments in reply: he just bluntly ridiculed the idea of his consenting to prey on them; and he said humbly, "I know I can't contribute as much to our living as you two can — the petticoats carry the brains in our family — but, be a burden to you? Not if I know it."

"Pride! pride! pride!" objected Julia, lifting her grand violet orbs like a pensive Madonna.

"And such pride! The pride that falls into a fire-bucket," suggested prosaic mamma.

"That is cutting," said Edward; "but, *soyons de notre siècle;* flunkeyism is on the decline. I'll give you something to put in both your pipes: —

> "Honor and rank from no condition rise,
> Act well thy part: in that the honor lies."

"Yes, yes," said Mrs. Dodd, "only first choose your part; and let your choice be reasonable."

"Mine was Hobson's; and he never chooses wrong. Come, come," said he, and appealed calmly to their

reason; by which means he made no impression at all. Then he happened to say, "Besides, I *must* do something; I own to you I am more cast down than I choose to show. Mother, I feel like lead ever since she died." Now on this their faces filled with sympathy directly. So encouraged he went on to say, "But when I got my hand on that old duffer's collar, and lowered him to the ladder, and the fire shot roaring out of the window after him, too late to eat him, and the crowd cheered the fireman and me, I did feel warm about the waistcoat, and, for the first time this ever so long, life seemed not quite ended. I felt there was a little bit of good left, that even a poor dunce like me could do, and she could approve, if she can look down and see me, as I hope she can."

"There, there," said Mrs. Dodd, tearfully, "I am disarmed. But, my darling, I do not know what you are talking about; stay; why, Edward, surely — I hope — you were not the young gentleman in the paper: the one that risked his life so nobly; so foolishly, if it was you."

"Why, mother, didn't I tell you it was me?" said Edward, coloring.

"No, that you did not," said Julia. "Was it? was it? oh, do be quick and tell one. There, it was."

"Well, it was: ah, I remember now; that splendiferous account shut me up. Oh, I say, didn't the *'Tiser* pitch it strong?"

"Not at all," cried Julia: "I believe every word and ever so much more. Mamma, we have got a hero, and here he is at breakfast with us, like an ordinary mortal." She rose suddenly with a burst of her old fire, and fell upon him and kissed him, and said earnestly how proud she was of him; "and so is mamma: she may say what she likes."

"Proud of him! ah, that I am, very proud, and very unhappy. *Heroes are my horror.* How often and how earnestly have I prayed that my son might not be brave like his father, but stay quietly at home out of harm's way!"

Here remonstrance ended. The members of this family, happy by nature, though unhappy by accident, all knew when to yield to each other.

Unfortunately, in proportion as all these excitements great and small died, and her life became quiet and uniform, the depth of Julia's wound showed itself more and more. She never sang nor hummed, as she used to do, going about the house. She never laughed. She did burst out with fervid sentiments now and then, but very rarely; on the whole, a pensive languor took the place of her lovely impetuosity. Tears rushed in a moment to her eyes with no visible cause. She often stole to the window, and looked all up and down the street; and when she was out of doors she looked down every side-street she passed; and sometimes, when a quick light step came behind them, or she saw a tall young gentleman at a great distance, her hand twitched her mother's arm or trembled on it. And always, when they came home, she lingered a moment at the door-step and looked all round before she went in.

At all these signs one-half of Mrs. Dodd's heart used to boil with indignation, and the other half melt with pity. For she saw her daughter was looking for "the wretch." Indeed, Mrs. Dodd began to fear she had done unwisely in ignoring "the wretch;" Julia's thoughts dwelt on him none the less; indeed, all the more, as it seemed; so the topic interdicted by tacit consent bade fair to become a barrier between her and Mrs. Dodd, hitherto her bosom friend as well as her mother. This was intolerable to poor Mrs. Dodd, and at last she said

one day, "My darling, do not be afraid of me: rob me of your happy thoughts if you will, but oh! not of your sad ones."

Julia began to cry directly. "Oh, no, mamma," she sobbed, "do not you encourage me in my folly. I know I have thrown away my affections on one who — I shall never see him again, shall I, mamma? Oh, to think I can say those words, and yet go living on."

Mrs. Dodd sighed. "And if you saw him, would that mend the chain he has chosen to break?"

"I don't know; but if I could only see him, to part friends! It is cruel to hate him, now he has lost his sister; and then I have got her message to give him. And I want to ask him why he was afraid of me; why he could not tell me he had altered his mind. Did he think I wanted to have him against his will? O mamma," said she, imploringly, "he *seemed* to love me; he *seemed* all truth. I am a poor, unfortunate girl."

Mrs. Dodd had only caresses to soothe her with. She could not hold out any hopes.

One day Julia asked her timidly if she might be a district visitor. "My dear friend was, and advised me to be one too; but I was wilful in those days, and chose to visit by fits and starts, and be independent. I am humbled now a little: may I, mamma? Since she died every word of hers seems a law to me."

Mrs. Dodd assented cordially, as she would to anything else her wounded one had proposed.

This project brought Julia into communication with the new curate, and who should it prove to be but Mr. Hurd? At sight of him she turned white and red; and the whole scene in the church came back to her. But Mr. Hurd showed considerable tact for so young a man. He spoke to her in accents of deep respect, but confined his remarks strictly to the matter in hand.

She told her mother when she got home, and expressed her gratitude to Mr. Hurd, but said she wished they did not live in the same parish with him. This feeling, however, wore off by degrees, as her self-imposed duties brought her more and more into contact with him, and showed her his good qualities.

As for Mr. Hurd, he saw and understood her vivid emotion at sight of him; saw and pitied, not without wonder that so beautiful a creature should have been jilted. And from the first he marked his sense of Alfred's conduct by showing her a profound and chivalrous respect, which he did not bestow on other young ladies in his parish; on the contrary, he rather received homage from them than bestowed it. By and by he saw Julia suppress, if not hide, her own sorrow, and go sore-hearted day by day to comfort the poor and afflicted: he admired and almost venerated her for this. He called often on Mrs. Dodd, and was welcome. She concealed her address for the present from all her friends except Dr. Sampson; but Mr. Hurd had discovered her; and ladies do not snub the clergy. Moreover, Mr. Hurd was a gentleman, and inclined to High Church. This she liked. He was very good-looking, too, and quiet in his manners. Above all, he seemed to be doing her daughter good, for Julia and Mr. Hurd had one great sentiment in common. When the intimacy had continued some time on these easy terms, Mrs. Dodd saw that Mr. Hurd was falling in love with Julia, and that sort of love, warm but respectful, which soon leads to marriage, especially when the lover is a clergyman. This was more than Mrs. Dodd bargained for: she did not want to part with her daughter, and, under other circumstances, would have drawn in her horns. But Mr. Hurd's undisguised homage gratified her maternal heart, coming so soon after that great insult to her daughter; and then she

said to herself, "At any rate, he will help me cure her of 'the wretch.'" She was not easy in her mind, though: could not tell what would come of it all. So she watched her daughter's pensive face as only mothers watch, and saw a little of the old peach-bloom creeping back.

That was irresistible; she let things go their own way, and hoped for the best.

CHAPTER VII.

The tenacity of a private lunatic asylum is unique. A little push behind your back, and you slide into one, but to get out again is to scale a precipice with crumbling sides. Alfred, luckier than many, had twice nearly escaped, yet now he was tighter in than ever. His father at first meant to give him but a year or two of it, and let him out on terms, his spirit broken and Julia married. But his sister's death was fatal to him. By Mrs. Hardie's settlement the portion of any child of hers dying a minor, or intestate and childless, was to go to the other children; so now the prisoner had inherited his sister's ten thousand pounds, and a good slice of his bereaved enemy's and father's income. But this doubled his father's bitterness, that he, the unloved one, should be enriched by the death of the adored one, and also tempted his cupidity; and unfortunately shallow legislation conspired with that temptation. For, when an Englishman, sane or insane, is once pushed behind his back into a madhouse, those relatives who have hidden him from the public eye, i.e., from the eye of justice, can grab hold of his money behind his back, as they certified away his wits behind his back, and can administer it in the dark, and embezzle it, chanting, "But for us the 'dear deranged' would waste it." Nor do the monstrous enactments which confer this unconstitutional power on subjects, and shield its exercise from the light and safeguard of publicity, affix any penalty to the abuse of that power, if by one chance in a thousand detected. In lunacy law, extremes of intellect meet:

the British senator plays at Satan, and tempts human frailty and cupidity beyond what they are able to bear.

So behold a son at twenty-one years of age, devoted by a father to imprisonment for life. But stop a minute: the mad statutes, which by the threefold temptation of facility, obscurity, and impurity, insure the occasional incarceration and frequent detention of sane but moneyed men, do provide, though feebly, for their bare liberation, if perchance they should not yield to the *genius loci*, and the natural effect of confinement plus anguish, by going mad or dying. The Commissioners of Lunacy had power to liberate Alfred in spite of his relations. And that power, you know, he had soberly but earnestly implored them to exercise.

After a delay that seemed as strange to him as postponing a hand to a drowning man, he received an official letter from Whitehall. With bounding heart he broke the seal, and devoured the contents. They ran thus: —

SIR, — By order of the Commissioners of Lunacy I am directed to inform you that they are in the receipt of your letter of the 29th ultimo, which will be laid before the Board at their next meeting.

I am, etc.

Alfred was bitterly disappointed at the small advance he had made. However, it was a great point to learn that his letters were allowed to go to the commissioners at all, and would be attended to by degrees.

He waited and waited, and struggled hard to possess his soul in patience; at times his brain throbbed and his blood boiled, and he longed to kill the remorseless, kindless monsters who robbed him of his liberty, his rights as a man, and his Julia; but he knew this would not do; that what they wanted was to gnaw his reason away, and then who could disprove that he had always been mad?

Now he felt that brooding on his wrong would infuriate him; so he clenched his teeth, and vowed a solemn vow that nothing should drive him mad. By advice of a patient he wrote again to the commissioners, begging for a special commission to inquire into his case; and, this done, with rare stoicism, self-defence, and wisdom in one so young, he actually sat down to read hard for his first class. Now, to do this, he wanted the ethics, politics, and rhetoric of Aristotle, certain dialogues of Plato, the comedies of Aristophanes, the first-class historians, Demosthenes, Lucretius, a Greek Testament, Wheeler's Analysis, Prideaux, Horne, and several books of reference, sacred and profane. But he could not get these books without Dr. Wycherley, and unfortunately he had cut that worthy dead in his own asylum.

"The scornful dog" had to eat wormwood-pudding and humble-pie. He gulped these delicacies as he might; and Dr. Wycherley showed excellent qualities. He entered into his maniac's studies with singular alacrity, supplied him with several classics from his own shelves, and borrowed the rest at the London library. Nor did his zeal stop there; he offered to read an hour a day with him, and owned it would afford him the keenest gratification to turn out an Oxford first classman from his asylum. This remark puzzled Alfred, and set him thinking; it bore a subtle family resemblance to the observations he heard every day from the patients; it was so one-eyed.

Soon Alfred became the doctor's pet maniac. They were often closeted together in high discourse, and, indeed, discussed psychology, metaphysics, and moral philosophy with indefatigable zest, long after common-sense would have packed them both off to bed, the donkeys. In fact, they got so thick that Alfred thought it only fair to say one day, "Mind, doctor, all these pleasant,

fruitful hours we spend together so sweetly will not prevent my indicting you for a conspiracy as soon as I get out; it will rob the retribution of half its relish, though."

"Ah! my dear young friend and fellow-student," said the doctor, blandly, "let us not sacrifice the delights of our profitable occupation of imbibing the sweets of intellectual intercourse to vague speculations as to our future destiny. During the course of a long and not, I trust, altogether unprofitable career, it has not unfrequently been my lot to find myself on the verge of being indicted, sued, assassinated, hung. Yet here I sit, as yet unimmolated on the altar of phrenetic vengeance. This is ascribable to the fact that my friends and pupils always adopt a more favorable opinion of me long before I part with them; and ere many days (and this I divine by infallible indicia) *your* cure will commence in earnest; and, in proportion as you progress to perfect restoration of the powers of judgment, you will grow in suspicion of the fact of being under a delusion, or rather, I should say, a very slight perversion and perturbation of the forces of your admirable intellect, and a proper subject for temporary seclusion. Indeed, this consciousness of insanity is the one diagnostic of sanity that never deceives me; and, on the other hand, an obstinate persistence in the hypothesis of perfect rationality demonstrates the fact that insanity yet lingers in the convolutions and recesses of the brain, and that it would not be humane as yet to cast the patient on a world in which he would inevitably be taken some ungenerous advantage of."

Alfred ventured to inquire whether this was not rather paradoxical.

"Certainly," said the ready doctor; "and paradoxicality is an indicial characteristic of truth in all matters beyond the comprehension of the vulgar."

"That *sounds* rational," said the maniac, very dryly.

One afternoon, grinding hard for his degree, he was invited down-stairs to see two visitors.

At that word he found out how prison tries the nerves. He trembled with hope and fear. It was but for a moment. He bathed his face and hands to compose himself, made his toilet carefully, and went into the drawing-room all on his guard. There he found Dr. Wycherley and two gentlemen; one was an ex-physician, the other an ex-barrister, who had consented to resign feelessness and brieflessness for a snug fifteen hundred pounds a year at Whitehall. After a momentary greeting they continued the conversation with Dr. Wycherley, and scarcely noticed Alfred. They were there *pro formâ;* a plausible lunatic had pestered the Board, and extorted a visit of ceremony. Alfred's blood boiled, but he knew it must not boil over. He contrived to throw a short, pertinent remark in every now and then. This, being done politely, told; and at last Dr. Eskell, Commissioner of Lunacy, smiled and turned to him. "Allow me to put a few questions to you."

"The more the better, sir," said Alfred.

Dr. Eskell then asked him to describe minutely and in order all he had done since seven o'clock that day. And he did it. Examined him in the multiplication table. And he did it. And, while he was applying these old-fashioned tests, Wycherley's face wore an expression of pity that was truly comical. Now this Dr. Eskell had an itch for the classics, so he went on to say, "You have been a scholar, I hear."

"I am not old enough to be a scholar, sir," said Alfred; "but I am a student."

"Well, well; now can you tell me what follows this line? —

"Jusque datum sceleri canimus populumque potentem."

"Why, not at the moment."

"Oh, surely you can," said Dr. Eskell, ironically. "It is in a tolerably well-known passage. Come, try."

"Well, I'll *try*," said Alfred, sneering secretly. "Let me see, —

> "Mum — mum — mum — populumque potentem,
> In sua victrici conversum viscera dextrâ."

"Quite right. Now go on, if you can."

Alfred, who was playing with his examiner all this time, pretended to cudgel his brains, then went on, and warmed involuntarily with the lines, —

> "Cognatasque acies et rupto fœdere regni
> Certatum totis concussi viribus orbis
> In commune nefas; infestis que obvia signis
> Signa, pares aquilas, et pila minantia pilis."

"He seems to have a good memory," said the examiner, rather taken aback.

"Oh, that is nothing for him," observed Wycherley.

> "He has Horace all by heart; you'd wonder:
> And mouths out Homer's Greek like thunder."

The great faculty of memory thus tested, Dr. Eskell proceeded to a greater — judgment. "Spirited lines those, sir."

"Yes, sir; but surely rather tumid. 'The whole *forces* of the shaken globe?' But little poets love big words."

"I see, you agree with Horace, that so great a work as an epic poem should open modestly, with an invocation."

"No, sir," said Alfred. "I think that rather an arbitrary and peevish canon of friend Horace. The Æneid, you know, begins just as he says an epic ought not to begin; and the Æneid is the greatest Latin epic. In the next place, the use of modesty is to keep a man from

writing an epic poem at all; but, if he will have that impudence, why then he had better have the courage to plunge into the Castalian stream, like Virgil and Lucan, not crawl in funking and holding on by the Muse's apron-string. But, excuse me, *quorsum hæc tam putida tendunt?* what have the Latin poets to do with this modern's sanity or insanity?"

Mr. Abbott snorted contemptuously in support of the query. But Dr. Eskell smiled, and said, "Continue to answer me as intelligently, and you may find it has a great deal to do with it."

Alfred took this hint, and said artfully, "Mine was a thoughtless remark; of course a gentleman of your experience can test the mind on any subject, however trivial." He added piteously, "Still, if you would but leave the poets, who are all half crazy themselves, and examine me in the philosophers of antiquity, surely it would be a higher criterion."

Dr. Wycherley explained in a patronizing whisper, "He labors under an abnormal contempt for poetry, dating from his attack. Previously to that he actually obtained a prize poem himself."

"Well, doctor, and after that am I wrong to despise poetry?"

They might have comprehended this on paper, but spoken it was too keen for them all three. The visitors stared. Dr. Wycherley came to their aid. "You might examine my young friend for hours, and not detect the one crevice in the brilliancy of his intellectual armor."

The maniac made a face as one that drinketh verjuice suddenly. "For pity's sake, doctor, don't be so inaccurate. Say a spot on the brilliancy, or a crevice in the armor; but not a crevice in the brilliancy. My good friend here, gentlemen, deals in conjectural certificates and broken metaphors. He dislocates more tropes, to my sorrow,

than even his friend Shakespeare, whom he thinks a greater philosopher than Aristotle, and who calls the murder of an individual sleeper the murder of sleep, confounding the concrete with the abstract, and then talks of taking arms against a sea of troubles: query, a cork-jacket and a flask of brandy."

"Well, Mr. Hardie," said Dr. Eskell, rather feebly, "let me tell you those passages which so shock your *peculiar* notions, are among the most applauded."

"Very likely, sir," retorted the maniac, whose logic was up; "but applauded only in a nation where the *floods* clap their hands every Sunday morning, and we all pray for peace, giving as our exquisite reason that we have got the God of hosts on our side in war."

Mr. Abbott, the other commissioner, had endured all this chat with an air of weary indifference. He now said to Dr. Wycherley, "I wish to put you a question or two in private."

Alfred was horribly frightened. This was the very dodge that had ruined him at Silverton House. "Oh, no, gentlemen!" he cried, imploringly, "let me have fair play. You have given me no secret audience, then why give my accuser one? I am charged with a single delusion; for mercy's sake go to the point at once, and examine me on that head."

"Now you talk sense," said Mr. Abbott, as if the previous topics had been chosen by Alfred.

"But that will excite him," objected Dr. Eskell. "It always does excite them."

"It excites the insane, but not the sane," said Alfred. "So there is another test; you will observe whether it excites *me*." Then, before they could interrupt him, he glided on: "The supposed hallucination is this: I strongly suspect my father, a bankrupt — and therefore dishonest — banker, of having somehow misappropriated a sum of

fourteen thousand pounds, which sum is known to have been brought from India by one Captain Dodd, and has disappeared."

"Stop a minute," said Mr. Abbott. "Who knows it, besides you?"

"The whole family of the Dodds. They will show you his letter from India, announcing his return with the money."

"Where do they live?"

"Albion Villa, Barkington."

Mr. Abbott noted the address in his book; and Alfred, mightily cheered and encouraged by this sensible act, went on to describe the various indications, which, insufficient singly, had by their united force driven him to his conclusion. When he described David's appearance and words on his father's lawn at night, Wycherley interrupted him quietly: "Are you quite sure this was not a vision, a phantom of the mind heated by your agitation and your suspicions?"

Dr. Eskell nodded assent, knowing nothing about the matter.

"Pray, doctor, was I the only person who saw this vision?" inquired Alfred, slyly.

"I conclude so," said Wycherley, with an admirable smile.

"But why do you conclude so? because you are one of those who reason in a circle of assumptions. Now it happens that Captain Dodd was seen and felt on that occasion by three persons besides myself."

"Name them," said Mr. Abbott, sharply.

"A policeman called Reynolds, another policeman whose name I don't know, and Miss Julia Dodd. The policemen helped me lift Captain Dodd off the grass, sir; Julia met us close by, and we four carried Dr. Wycherley's phantom home together to Albion Villa."

Mr. Abbott noted down all the names, and then turned to Dr. Wycherley. "What do you say to that?"

"I say it is a very important statement," said the doctor, blandly, "and that I am sure my young friend would not advance it unless he was firmly persuaded of its reality."

"Much obliged, doctor; and you would not contradict me so rashly in a matter I know all about and you know nothing about, if it was not your fixed habit to found facts on theories instead of theories on facts."

"There, that is enough," said Mr. Abbott. "I have brought you both to an issue at last. I shall send to Barkington, and examine the policemen and the Dodds."

"Oh, thank you, sir," cried Alfred, with emotion. "If you once apply genuine tests like that to my case, I shall not be long in prison."

"Prison?" said Wycherley, reproachfully.

"Have you any complaint, then, to make of your treatment here?" inquired Dr. Eskell.

"No, no, sir," said Alfred, warmly. "Dr. Wycherley is the very soul of humanity. Here are no tortures, no handcuffs, nor leg-locks, no brutality, no insects that murder sleep — without offence to logic. In my last asylum the attendants inflicted violence; here they are only allowed to endure it. And, gentlemen, I must tell you a noble trait in my enemy there: nothing can make him angry with madmen; their lies, their groundless and narrow suspicions of him, their deplorable ingratitude to him, of which I see examples every day that rile *me* on his account; all these things seem to glide off him, baffled by the infinite kindness of his heart, and the incomparable sweetness of his temper; and he returns the duffers good for evil with scarcely an effort."

At this unexpected tribute the water stood in the doctor's eyes. It was no more than the truth; but this

was the first maniac he had met intelligent enough to see his good qualities clearly and express them eloquently.

"In short," continued Alfred, "to be happy in his house, all a man wants is to be insane. But, as I am not insane, I am miserable; no convict, no galley slave is so wretched as I am, gentlemen. And what is my crime?"

"Well, well," said Dr. Eskell, kindly, "I think it likely you will not be very long in confinement." They then civilly dismissed him; and on his departure asked Dr. Wycherley his candid opinion. Dr. Wycherley said he was now nearly cured; his ability to discuss his delusion without excitement was of itself a proof of that. But in another month he would be better still. The doctor concluded his remarks thus: —

"However, gentlemen, you have heard him: now judge for yourselves whether anybody can be as clever as he is, without the presence of more or less abnormal excitement of the organs of intelligence."

It was a bright day for Alfred. He saw he had made an excellent impression on the commissioners; and, as luck does not always come single, after many vain attempts to get a letter posted to Julia, he found this very afternoon a nurse was going away next day. He offered her a guinea, and she agreed to post a letter. Oh, the happiness it was to the poor prisoner to write it, and unburden his heart and tell his wrongs. He kept his manhood for his enemies; his tears fell on the paper he sent to his forlorn bride. He had no misgivings of her truth, he judged her by himself: gave her credit for anxiety, but not for doubt. He concluded a long, ardent, tender letter by begging her to come and see him; and, if refused admission, to publish his case in the newspapers, and employ a lawyer to proceed against all the parties concerned in his detention. Day after day he waited for an answer to his letter; none came. Then he

began to be sore perplexed, and torn with agonizing doubts. What if her mind was poisoned, too! What if she thought him mad! What if some misfortune had befallen her! What if she had believed him dead, and her heart had broken! Hitherto he had seen his own trouble chiefly, but now he began to think day and night on hers; and though he ground on for his degree, not to waste time, and not to be driven mad, yet it was almost superhuman labor; sighs issued from his laboring breast, while his hard, indomitable brain labored away, all up-hill, at Aristotle's divisions and definitions.

On the seventh day, the earliest the mad statute allowed, the two commissioners returned, and this time Mr. Abbott took the lead, and told him that the policeman Reynolds had left the force, and the Dodds had left the town, and were in London, but their address not known.

At this Alfred was much agitated. She was alive, and perhaps near him.

"I have heard a good deal of your story," said Mr. Abbott, "and, coupling it with what we have seen of you, we think your relatives have treated you, and a young lady of whom everybody speaks with respect" —

"God bless you for saying that! God bless you!"

"— treated you both, I say, with needless severity."

Dr. Eskell then told him the result of the special commission, now closed. "I believe you to be cured," said he, "and Mr. Abbott has some doubts whether you were ever positively insane. We shall lay your case before the Board at once, and the Board will write to the party who signed the order, and propose to him to discharge you at once."

At this magnificent project Alfred's countenance fell, and he stared with astonishment. "What! have you not the power to do me justice without soliciting injustice to help you?"

"The Board has the power," said Dr. Eskell, "but for many reasons they exercise it with prudence and reserve. Besides, it is only fair to those who have signed the order, to give them the graceful office of liberating the patient; it paves the way to reconciliation."

Alfred sighed. The commissioners, to keep up his heart, promised to send him copies of their correspondence with the person who had signed the order. "Then," said Mr. Abbott, kindly, "you will see your case is not being neglected."

The following *précis*, though imperfect, will give some idea of the correspondence: —

1. The Board wrote to Thomas Hardie, letting him know the result of the special commission, and requesting him to discharge his nephew.

Thomas quaked. Richard smiled, and advised Thomas to take no notice. By this a week was gained to injustice and lost to justice.

2. The Board pointed out Thomas Hardie's inadvertence in not answering No. 1; enclosed copy of it, and pressed for a reply.

Thomas quaked, Richard smiled.

3. Thomas Hardie to the Board. From what he had heard, it would be premature to discharge Alfred. Should prefer to wait a month or two.

4. Board to Alfred, conveying this in other terms.

5. Alfred to Board, warning them against this proposal. To postpone justice was to refuse justice, certainly for a time, probably forever.

6. The Board to Thomas Hardie, suggesting that if not released immediately, Alfred ought to have a trial; i. e., be allowed to go into the world with a keeper.

7. Alfred to the Board, begging that Dr. Sampson, an honest, independent physician, might be allowed to visit him and report to them.

8. The Board to Alfred, declining this for the present as unadvisable, they being in correspondence with the person who had signed the order, with a view to his liberation.

9. T. Hardie to the Board, shuffling, and requesting time to make further inquiries.

10. The Board, suggesting there should be some reasonable limit to delay.

11. T. Hardie, asking for a month to see about it.

12. The Board, suggesting a week.

13. Alfred Hardie, asking permission to be visited by a solicitor, with a view to protection of his liberty and property.

14. The Board, declining this, pending their correspondence with other parties, but asking him for the names and addresses of all his trustees.

15. Thomas Hardie, informing the Board he had now learned Alfred had threatened to kill his father as soon as ever he should get out, and leaving the Board to discharge him on their own responsibility if they chose, after this warning, but declining peremptorily to do so himself.

16, 17, 18. The Board, by advice of Mr. Abbott, to Alfred's trustees, warning them against any alienation of Alfred's money, under the notion that he was legally a lunatic, and saying that a public inquiry appeared inevitable, owing to Mr. T. Hardie's unwillingness to enter into their views.

19. To Alfred, inquiring whether he wished to encounter the expense of chancery proceedings to establish his sanity.

20. Alfred to the Board, imploring them to use their powers and discharge him without further delay, and assuring them he meditated no violence on his liberation, but should proceed against all parties under legal advice.

21. The Board to T. Hardie, warning him that he must in future pay Alfred's maintenance in asylum out of his own pocket, and pressing him either to discharge the young man, or else to apply to the lord chancellor for a commission *de lunatico inquirendo*, and enclosing copy of a letter from Wycherley, saying the patient was harmless.

22. T. Hardie respectfully declining to do either, but reminding the commissioners that the matter could be thrown into chancery without his consent, only the expense, which would be tremendous, would fall on the lunatic's estate, which might hereafter be regretted by the party himself. He concluded by promising to come to town and visit Alfred with his family physician, and write further in a week.

Having thus thrown dust in the eyes of the Board, Thomas Hardie and Richard consulted with a notoriously unscrupulous madhouse-keeper in the suburbs of London, and effected a master-stroke: whereof anon.

The correspondence had already occupied three months, and kept Alfred in a fever of the mind; of all the maddening things with which he had been harassed by the pretended curers of insanity, this tried him hardest. To see a dozen honest gentlemen wishing to do justice, able to do justice by one manly stroke of the pen, yet forego their vantage-ground, and descend to coax an able rogue to do their duty and undo his own interest and rascality! To see a strong cause turned into a weak one by the timidity of champions clad by law in complete steel; and a rotten cause, against which law and power, as well as truth, justice, and common-sense, had now declared, turned into a strong one by the pluck and cunning of his one unarmed enemy! The ancients feigned that the ingenious gods tortured Tantalus in hell by ever-present thirst, and water flowing to just the outside of his lips.

A Briton can thirst for liberty as hard as Tantalus or hunted deer can thirst for cooling springs; and this soul-gnawing correspondence brought liberty, and citizenhood, and love, and happiness, to the lips of Alfred's burning, pining, aching heart, again, and again, and again; then carried them away from him in mockery. Oh, the sickening anguish of hope deferred and deferred!

The hell it is, in suing long to bide.

But indeed his hopes began to sicken for good when he found that the Board would not allow any honest independent physician to visit him, or any solicitor to see him. At first, indeed, they refused it, because Mr. Thomas Hardie was going to let him out; but when T. Hardie would not move at their request, then on a fresh application they refused it, giving as their reason that they had already refused it. Yet in so keen a battle he would not throw away a chance; so he determined to win Dr. Wycherley altogether by hook or by crook, and get a certificate of sanity from him. Now a single white lie, he knew, would do the trick. He had only to say that Hamlet was mad. And "Hamlet was mad" is easily said.

Dr. Wycherley was a collector of mad people, and collectors are always amateurs, and very seldom connoisseurs. His turn of mind co-operating with his interests, led him to put down any man a lunatic, whose intellect was manifestly superior to his own. Alfred Hardie, and one or two more contemporaries, had suffered by this humor of the good doctor's. Nor did the dead escape him entirely. Pascal, according to Wycherley, was a madman with an illusion about a precipice; John Howard, a moral lunatic in whom the affections were reversed; Saul, a moping maniac with homicidal paroxysms and nocturnal visions; Paul, an incoherent

lunatic, who, in his writings, flies off at a tangent, and who admits having once been the victim of a photopsic illusion in broad daylight; Nebuchadnezzar, a lycanthropical lunatic; Joan of Arc, a theomaniac; Bobby Burton and Oliver Cromwell, melancholy maniacs; Napoleon, an ambitious maniac, in whom the sense of impossibility became gradually extinguished by visceral and cerebral derangement; Porson, an oinomaniac; Luther, a phrenetic patient of the old demoniac breed, alluded to by Shakespeare: —

> "One sees more devils than vast hell can hold.
> That is the madman."

But without intending any disrespect to any of these gentlemen, he assigned the golden crown of insanity to Hamlet. To be sure, this character tells his friends in the play he shall *feign* insanity, and swears them not to reveal the reason; and after this hint to his friends and the pit (it is notorious he was not written for readers), he keeps his word, and does it as cleverly as if his name was David or Brutus instead of Hamlet; indeed, like Edgar, he rather overdoes it, and so puzzles his enemies in the play, and certain German criticasters and English mad doctors in the closet, and does not puzzle his bosom friend in the play one bit, nor the pit for whom he was created. Add to this his sensibility, and his kindness to others, and his eloquent grief at the heart-rending situation which his father's and mother's son was placed in and had brains to realize, though his pyschological critics, it seems, have not; and add to all that the prodigious extent of his mind, his keen observation, his deep reflection, his brilliant fancy, united for once in a way with the great academic or judicial intellect, that looks down and sees all the sides of everything — and what can this rare intellectual compound be? Wycherley

decided the question. Hamlet was too much greater in the world of mind than S. T. Coleridge and his German criticasters; too much higher, deeper, and broader than Esquirol, Pinel, Sauze, Haslam, Munro, Pagan, Wigan, Prichard, Romberg, Wycherley, and such small deer, to be anything less than a madman.

Now, in their midnight discussions, Dr. Wycherley more than once alluded to the insanity of Hamlet; and offered proofs. But Alfred declined the subject as too puerile. "A man must exist before he can be insane," said the Oxonian philosopher, severe in youthful gravity. But when he found that Dr. Wycherley, had he lived in Denmark at the time, would have conferred cannily with Hamlet's uncle, removed that worthy relative's disbelief in Hamlet's insanity, and signed the young gentleman away behind his back into a lunatic asylum, Alfred began to sympathize with this posthumous victim of psychological science. "I believe the bloke was no madder than I am," said he. He got the play, studied it afresh, compared the fiction with the legend, compared Hamlet humbugging his enemies and their tool, Ophelia, with Hamlet opening his real mind to himself or his Horatio the very next moment; contrasted the real madness the author has portrayed in the plays of Hamlet and Lear by the side of these extravagant imitations, to save, if possible, even dunces, and dreamers, and criticasters from being taken in by the latter; and at their next séance pitched into the doctor's pet chimera, and what with logic, fact, ridicule, and the author's lines, knocked it to atoms.

Now, in their midnight discussions, Dr. Wycherley had always handled the question of Alfred Hardie's sanity or insanity with a philosophical coolness, the young man admired, and found it hard to emulate; but this philosophic calmness deserted him the moment

Hamlet's insanity was disputed, and the harder he was pressed, the angrier, the louder, the more confused the psychological physician became; and presently he got furious, burst out of the anti-spasmodic or round-about style, and called Alfred a d——d ungrateful, insolent puppy, and went stamping about the room; and, finally, to the young man's horror, fell down in a fit of an epileptic character, grinding his teeth and foaming at the mouth.

Alfred was filled with regret, and, though alarmed, had the presence of mind not to call for assistance. The fit was a very mild one in reality, though horrible to look at. The doctor came to, and asked feebly for wine. Alfred got it him, and the doctor, with a mixture of cunning and alarm in his eye, said he had fainted away, or nearly. Alfred assented coaxingly, and looked sheepish. After this he took care never to libel Hamlet's intellect again by denying his insanity; for he was now convinced of what he had long half suspected, that the doctor had a bee in his own bonnet; and Alfred had studied true insanity all this time, and knew how inhumane it is to oppose a monomaniac's foible; it only infuriates and worries him. No power can convince him.

But now he resolved to play on the doctor's foible. It went against his conscience; but the temptation was so strong. He came to him with a hang-dog air.

"Doctor," said he, "I have been thinking over your arguments, and I capitulate. If Hamlet ever existed, he was as mad as a March hare." And he blushed at this his first quibble.

Dr. Wycherley beamed with satisfaction.

"My young friend, this gives me sincere pleasure; not on my account, but on your own. There goes one of your illusions then. Now tell me — the fourteen thou-

sand pounds! Have you calmly reconsidered that too?"

Alfred hung his head, and looked guiltier and guiltier.

"Why," said he, "that never amounted to anything more than strong suspicion. It has long ceased to occupy my mind in excess. However, should I ever be so fortunate as to recover my liberty, I have no objection to collect the evidence about it pro and con, and then make you the judge instead of myself." This he delivered with an admirable appearance of indifference.

"Very well, sir," said the doctor, dryly. "Then, now I have a piece of good news for *you*."

"O doctor! what is that?"

"Your cure is complete; that is all. You are now a sane man, as sane as I am."

Alfred was a little disappointed at this piece of news; but recovering himself, asked him to certify that, and let him send the certificate to the Board. Dr. Wycherley said he would with pleasure.

"I'll bring it to you when I make my round," said he.

Alfred retired triumphant, and went in at Plato with a good heart.

In about an hour Dr. Wycherley paid him the promised visit. But what may not an hour bring forth? He came with mortification and regret in his face to tell Alfred that an order of transfer had been signed by the proper parties, and countersigned by two commissioners, and he was to go to Dr. Wolf's asylum that day.

Alfred groaned. "I knew my father would outwit my feeble friends somehow or other," said he. "What is his game? do you know?"

"I suppose, to obtain a delay; and meantime get you into an asylum where they will tell the commissioners you are worse again, and perhaps do something to make their words good. Dr. Wolf, between ourselves, will

say or do almost anything for money. And his asylum is conducted on the old system, though he pretends not."

"My dear friend," said Alfred, "will you do me a favor?"

"How could I deny you anything at this sorrowful moment?"

"Here is an advertisement I want inserted in the *Morning Advertiser*."

"Oh, I can't do that, I fear."

"Look at it before you break my heart by refusing me."

Dr. Wycherley looked at it, and said it was innocent, being unintelligible; and he would insert it himself.

"Three insertions, dear doctor," said Alfred. "Here is the money."

The doctor then told him sorrowfully he must pack up his things. Dr. Wolf's keepers were waiting for him.

The moment of parting came. Then Alfred solemnly forgave Dr. Wycherley for signing away his wits, and thanked him for all his kindness and humanity. "We shall never meet again, I fear," said he; "I feel a weight of foreboding here about my heart I never felt before; yet my trials have been many and great. I think the end is at hand." Dr. Wolf's keepers received him, and their first act was to handcuff him. The cold steel struck into him deeper than his wrist, and reminded him of Silverton Grove; he could not suppress a shudder. The carriage rolled all through London with him. He saw the parks with autumn's brown and golden tints; he saw the people, some rich, some poor, but none of them prisoners. He saw a little girl all rags. "Oh, if I could be as ragged as you are," he said, "and free!"

At last they reached Drayton House; a huge old mansion, fortified into a jail. His handcuffs were whipped

off in the yard. He was ushered into a large, gloomy drawing-room. Dr. Wolf soon came to him, and they measured each other by the eye like two prize-fighters. Dr. Wolf's eye fell under Alfred's, and the latter felt he was capable of much foul play. He was one of the old bull-necked breed; and contained the bull-dog and the spaniel in his single nature. "I hope you will be comfortable here, sir," said he, doggedly.

"I will try, sir."

"The first-class patients dine in half an hour."

"I will be ready, sir."

"Full dress in the evening; there are several ladies." Alfred assented by a bow. Dr. Wolf rang a bell, and told a servant to show Mr. Hardie his room.

He had just time to make his toilet when the bell rang for dinner.

As he went down a nurse met him, held up something white to him as she came, lowered it quickly, and dropped it at his feet in passing.

It was a *billet-doux*.

It was twisted into a pretty shape, scented, and addressed to Mr. Hardie, in a delicate Italian hand, and in that pale ink which seems to reflect the charming timidity of the fair who use it.

He wondered; carried it into a recess; then opened it and read it.

"It contained but this one line: —

"*Drink nothing but water at dinner.*"

These words in that delicate Italian hand sent a chill through Alfred. What on earth was all this? Was he to be poisoned? Was his life aimed at now instead of his reason? What was this mysterious drama prepared for him the very moment he set his foot in the place, perhaps before? A poisoner, and a friend! Both strangers. He went down to dinner, and contrived to

examine every lady and gentleman at the table. But they were all strangers. Presently a servant filled his glass with beer; he looked, and saw it was poured from a small jug holding only his portion. Alfred took his ring off his finger, and holding the glass up, dropped his ring in.

"What is that for?" inquired one or two.

"Oh, my ring has a peculiar virtue; it tells me what is good for me. Ah! what do I see? my ruby changes color. Fetch me a clean glass." And he filled it with water from a caraffe. "No, sir, leave the beer. I'll analyze it in my room after dinner; I'm a chemist."

Dr. Wolf changed color, and was ill at ease. Here was a bold and ugly customer. However, he said nothing, and felt sure his morphia could not be detected in beer by any decomposer but the stomach. Still he was rather mystified.

In the evening Alfred came dressed into the drawing-room, and found several gentlemen and ladies there. One of the ladies seemed to attract the lion's share of male homage. Her back was turned to Alfred; but it was a beautiful back, with great magnificent neck and shoulders, and a skin like satin; she was tall, but rounded and symmetrical, had a massive but long and shapely white arm, and perfect hand; and masses of thick black hair sat on her grand white poll, like a raven on a marble pillar.

It was not easy to get near her, for the mad gentlemen were fawning on her all round like Queen Elizabeth's courtiers.

However, Dr. Wolf, seeing Alfred standing alone, said, "Let me introduce you," and took him round to her. The courtiers fell back a little. The lady turned her stately head, and her dark eyes ran lightly all over Alfred in a moment.

He bowed, and blushed like a girl. She courtesied composedly and without a symptom of recognition — deep water runs still — and Dr. Wolf introduced them ceremoniously.

"Mr. Hardie — Mrs. Archbold."

CHAPTER VIII.

On Alfred's leaving Silverton, Mrs. Archbold was prostrated. It was a stunning blow to her young passion, and left her weary, desolate.

But she was too strong to lie helpless under disappointed longings. Two days she sat stupefied with the heartache; after that she bustled about her work in a fervor of half-crazy restlessness and ungovernable irritability, quenched at times by fits of weeping. As she wept apart, but raged and tyrannized in public, she soon made Silverton House Silverton Oven, especially to those who had the luck to be of her sex. Then Baker timidly remonstrated; at the first word she snapped him up, and said a change would be good for both of them. He apologized; in vain; that very day she closed by letter with Dr. Wolf, who had often invited her to be his "matron." Her motive, half hidden from herself, was to be anywhere near her favorite.

Installed at Drayton House, she waited some days, and coquetted womanlike with her own desires, then dressed neatly but soberly, and called at Dr. Wycherley's; sent in a note explaining who she was with a bit of soft sawder, and asked to see Alfred.

She was politely but peremptorily refused. She felt this rebuff bitterly. She went home stung and tingling to the core. But bitters wholesome be; offended pride now allied with strong good-sense to wither a wild affection; and, as it was no longer fed by the presence of its object, her wound healed, all but the occasional dull throbbing that precedes a perfect cure.

At this stage of her convalescence, Dr. Wolf told her in an off-hand way that Mr. Hardie, a patient of doubtful insanity, was coming to his asylum, to be kept there by hook or by crook. (She was entirely in Wolf's confidence, and he talked of these things to her in English.) The impenetrable creature assented outwardly, with no sign of emotion whatever, but one flash of the eye, and one heave of the bosom swiftly suppressed. She waited calmly and patiently till she was alone, then yielded to joy and triumph; they seemed to leap inside her. But this very thing alarmed her. "Better for me never to see him again," she thought. "His power over me is too terrible. Ah, good-by to the peace and comfort I have been building up! He will scatter them to the winds. He has."

She tried not to think of him too much. And, while she was so struggling, Wolf let out that Alfred was to have morphia at dinner the first day: morphia, the accursed drug with which these dark men in these dark places coax the reason away out of the head by degrees, or with a potent dose stupefy the victim, then act surprise, alarm; and make his stupor the ground for applying medical treatment to the doomed wretch. Edith Archbold knew the game, and at the word "morphia," pity and passion rose in her bosom irresistible. She smiled in Dr. Wolf's face, and hated him, and secretly girt herself up to baffle him, and protect Alfred's reason, and win his heart through his gratitude.

She received him as I have related, to throw dust in Dr. Wolf's eyes, but she acted so admirably that some went into Alfred's. "Ah," thought he, "she is angry with herself for her amorous folly; and, with the justice of her sex, she means to spite poor me for it." He sighed, for he felt her hostility would be fatal to him. To give her no fresh offence, he fell into her manner.

and treated her with a world of distant respect. Then again, who else but she could have warned him against poison? Then again, if so, why look so cold and stern at him? He cast one or two wistful glances at her, but the artful woman of thirty was impenetrable in public to the candid man of twenty-one. Even her passion could not put them on an equality.

That night he could not sleep. He lay wondering what would be the next foul practice, and how he should parry it.

He wrote next morning to the commissioners that two of their number, unacquainted with the previous proceedings of the Board, had been surprised into indorsing an order of transfer to an asylum bearing a very inferior character to Dr. Wycherley's; the object of this was clearly foul play. Accordingly, Dr. Wolf had already tried to poison his reason, by drugging his beer at dinner. He added that Dr. Wycherley had now signed a certificate of his sanity, and implored the Board to inspect it, and discharge him at once, or else let a solicitor visit him at once, and take the requisite steps towards a public inquiry.

While waiting anxiously for the answer, it cost him all his philosophy to keep his heart from eating itself. But he fought the good fight of reason; he invited the confidences of the quieter mad people, and established a little court, and heard their grievances, and by impartial decisions and good-humor won the regard of the moderate patients, and of the attendants, all but three: Rooke, the head keeper, a morose, burly ruffian; Hayes, a bilious subordinate, Rooke's shadow; and Vulcan, a huge mastiff that would let nobody but Rooke touch him. He was as big as a large calf, and formidable as a small lion, though nearly toothless with age. He was let loose in the yard at night, and was an element in the restraint

system; many a patient would have tried to escape but for Vulcan. He was also an invaluable howler at night, and so co-operated with Dr. Wolf's bugs and fleas to avert sleep, that vile foe to insanity and all our diseases, private asylums included.

Alfred treated Mrs. Archbold with a distant respect that tried her hard. But that able woman wore sweetness and unobtrusive kindness, and bided her time.

In Drayton House the keeperesses eclipsed the keepers in cruelty to the poorer patients. No men except Dr. Wolf and his assistant had a pass-key into their department, so there was nobody they could deceive, nobody they held worth the trouble. In the absence of male critics they showed their real selves, and how wise it is to trust that gentle sex in the dark with irresponsible power over females. With unflagging patience they applied the hourly torture of petty insolence, needless humiliation, unreasonable refusals, to the poor madwomen; bored them with the poisoned gimlet, and made their hearts bleeding pincushions. But minute cruelty and wild caprice were not enough for them, though these never tired nor rested; they must vilify them too with degrading and savage names. Billingsgate might have gone to school to Drayton House. *Inter alia* they seemed in love with a term that Othello hit upon, only they used it not once, but fifty times a day, and struck decent women with it on the face, like a scorpion whip; and then the scalding tears were sure to run in torrents down their silly, honest, burning cheeks. But this was not all; they had got a large tank in a flagged room, nominally for cleanliness and cure, but really for bane and torture. For the least offence, or out of mere wantonness, they would drag a patient stark naked across the yard, and thrust her bodily under water again and again, keeping her down till almost gone with suffoca-

tion, and dismissing her more dead than alive with obscene and insulting comments ringing in her ears, to get warm again in the cold. This my ladies called "tanking."

In the ordinary morning ablutions they tanked without suffocating. But the immersion of the whole body in cold water was of itself a severe trial to those numerous patients in whom the circulation was weak, and, as medical treatment, hurtful and even dangerous. Finally these keeperesses, with diabolical insolence and cruelty, would bathe twenty patients in this tank, and then make them drink that foul water for their meals.

"The dark places of the land are full of horrible cruelty."

One day they tanked so savagely that Nurse Eliza, after months of sickly disapproval, came to the new redresser of grievances, and told.

What was he to do? He seized the only chance of redress; he ran panting with indignation to Mrs. Archbold, and blushing high, said imploringly, "Mrs. Archbold, you used to be kind-hearted" — and could say no more for something rising in his throat.

Mrs. Archbold smiled encouragingly on him, and said softly, "I am the same I always was — to you, Alfred."

"Oh, thank you; then pray send for Nurse Eliza, and hear the cruelties that are being done to the patients within a yard of us."

"You had better tell me yourself, if you want me to pay any attention."

"I can't. I don't know how to speak to a lady of such things as are done here. The brutes! the cowardly she-devils! Oh, how I should like to kill them!"

Mrs. Archbold laughed a little at his enthusiasm (fancy caring so what was done to a pack of women), and sent for Nurse Eliza. She came, and being ques-

tioned told Mrs. Archbold more than she had Alfred. "And, ma'am," said she, whimpering, "they have just been tanking one they had no business to touch; it is Mrs. Dale, her that is so close on her confinement. They tanked her cruelly, they did, and kept her under water till she was nigh gone. I came away: I couldn't stand it."

Alfred was walking about in a fury, and Nurse Eliza, in making this last revolting communication, lowered her voice for him not to hear; but his senses were quick. I think he heard, for he turned and came quickly to them.

"Mrs. Archbold, you are strong and brave — for a woman; oh, do go in to them and take them by the throat, and shake the life out of them, the merciless, cowardly beasts! Oh, that I could be a woman for an hour, or they could be men, I'd soon have my foot on some of the wretches."

Mrs. Archbold acted ignition. "Come with me, both of you," she said, and they were soon in the female department. Up came keeperesses directly, smirking and courtesying to her, and pretending not to look at Adonis. "Which of you nurses tanked Mrs. Dale?" said she, sternly.

"'Twasn't I, ma'am; 'twasn't I."

"Oh, fie!" said Eliza to one, "you know you were at the head of it."

She pointed out two as the leaders. The Archbold instantly had them seized by the others, — who, with treachery equal to their cowardice, turned eagerly against their fellow-culprits, to make friends with Power, — and inviting all the sensible maniacs who had been tanked, to assist or inspect, she bared her own statuesque arms, and, ably aided, soon plunged the offenders, screaming, crying, and whining, like spaniel bitches whipped, under

the dirty water. They swallowed some, and appreciated their own acts. Then she forced them to walk twice round the yard with their wet clothes clinging to them, hooted by the late victims.

"There," said Alfred, "let that teach you men will not own hyenas in petticoats for women."

Poor Alfred took all the credit of this performance; but, in fact, when the Archbold invited him to bear a hand, he showed the white feather.

"*I* won't touch the blackguardesses," said he, haughtily, turning it off on the score of contempt. "*You* give it them! Again, again! Brava!"

Mosaic retribution completed, Mrs. Archbold told the nurses if ever "tanking" recurred she would bundle the whole female staff into the street, and then have them indicted by the commissioners.

These virtuous acts did Edith Archbold for love for a young man. Whether mad women or sane, women pregnant or the reverse, were tanked or not, she cared at heart no more than whether sheep were washed or no in Ettrick's distant dale. She was retiring with a tender look at Alfred, and her pulse secretly unaccelerated by sheep-washing of she-wolves, when her grateful favorite appealed to her again: —

"Dear Mrs. Archbold, shall we punish and not comfort? This poor Mrs. Dale!"

The Archbold could have boxed his ears. "Dear boy," she murmured tenderly, "you teach us all our duty." She visited the tanked one, found her in a cold room after it, shivering like ague, and her teeth chattering. Mrs. Archbold had her to the fire, and got her warm clothes and a pint of wine, and probably saved her life and her child's — for love of a young man.

Why I think Mrs. Dale would otherwise have left this shifting scene, Mrs. Carey, the last woman in her con-

dition they tanked and then turned into a flagged cell that only wanted one frog of a grotto, was found soon after moribund; on which they bundled her out of the asylum to die. She did die next day, at home, but murdered by the asylum; and they told the commissioners she died through her friends taking her away from the asylum too soon. The commissioners had nothing to do but believe this, and did believe it. Inspectors who visit a temple of darkness, lies, cunning, and hypocrisy, four times a year, know mighty little of what goes on there the odd three hundred and sixty-one days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and fifty-seven seconds.[1]

"Now, Alfred," said Mrs. Archbold, "I can't be everywhere, or know everything; so you come to me when anything grieves you; and let me be the agent of your humanity."

She said this so charmingly, he was surprised into kissing her fair hand; then blushed, and thanked her warmly. Thus she established a chain between them. When he let too long elapse without appealing to her, she would ask his advice about the welfare of this or that patient; and so she cajoled him by the two foibles she had discerned in him — his vanity and his humanity.

Besides Alfred, there were two patients in Drayton House who had never been insane: a young man, and an old woman; of whom anon. There were also three ladies and one gentleman, who had been deranged, but had recovered years ago. This little incident, recovery, is followed in a public asylum by instant discharge; but in a private one, money, not sanity, is apt to settle the question of egress. The gentleman's case was scarce credible in the nineteenth century; years ago, being undeniably cracked, he had done what Dr. Wycherley

[1] Arithmetic of my boyhood. I hear the world revolves some minutes quicker now.

told Alfred was a sure sign of sanity; i. e., he had declared himself insane; and had even been so reasonable as to sign his own order and certificates, and so imprison himself illegally, but with perfect ease; no remonstrance against that illegality from the guardians of the law! When he got what plain men call sane, he naturally wanted to be free, and happening to remember he alone had signed the order of imprisonment, and the imaginary doctor's certificates, he claimed his discharge from illegal confinement. Answer: "First obtain a legal order for your discharge." On this he signed an order for his discharge. "That is not a legal order." — "It is as legal as the order on which I am here." Granted; but, legally or not, the asylum has *got* you; the open air has not got you. Possession is ninety-nine points of lunacy law. Die your own illegal prisoner, and let your kinsfolk eat your land, and drink your consols, and bury you in a pauper's shroud. All that Alfred could do for these victims was to promise to try and get them out some day, D.V. But there was a weak-minded youth, Francis Beverley, who had the honor to be under the protection of the lord chancellor. Now a lunatic or a softy protected by that functionary is literally a lamb protected by a wolf, and that wolf *ex officio* the cruellest, cunningest old mangler and fleecer of innocents in Christendom. Chancery lunatics are the richest class, yet numbers of them are flung among pauper and even criminal lunatics, at a few pounds a year, while their committees bag four-fifths of the money that has been assigned to keep the patient in comfort.

Unfortunately the protection of the chancellor extends to life and reason, as well as fleece; with the following result: —

In public asylums about forty per cent are said to be cured.

In private ones, twenty-five per cent at least; most of them poorish.

Of chancery lunatics, not five per cent.

Finally, one-third of all the chancery lunatics do every six years exchange the living tombs they are fleeced and bullied in, for dead tombs where they rest; and go from the sham protection of the lord chancellor of England to the real protection of their Creator and their Judge.

These statistics have been long before the world, and are dead figures to the skimmer of things, but tell a dark tale to the reader of things; so dark, that I pray Heaven to protect me, and all other weak, inoffensive persons, from the protection of my lord chancellor in this kind.

Beverley was so unfortunate as to exist before the date of the above petition; and suffered the consequences.

He was an aristocrat by birth, noble on both sides of his house, and unluckily had money. But for that he would have been a laboring man, and free. My lord protector committed him with six hundred pounds a year maintenance money to the care of his committee, the Honorable Fynes Beverley.

Now this corporate, yet honorable, individual, to whom something was committed, and so Chancery Lane called him in its own sweet French the thing committed, was a gentleman of birth, breeding, and intelligence. He undertook to take care of his simple cousin; and what he did take care of was himself.

THE SUB-LETTING SWINDLE.

1. The Honorable Fynes Beverley, Anglo-French committee, or crown tenant, sub-let soft Francis for three hundred pounds a year, pocketed three hundred pounds, and washed his hands of Frank.

2. Mr. Heselden, the sub-tenant, sub-let the softy of high degree for a hundred and fifty pounds, pocketed the surplus, and washed his hands of him.

3. The one hundred and fifty pound man sub-let him to Dr. Wolf at sixty pounds a year, pouched the surplus, and washed his hands of him.

And now what on earth was left for poor Dr. Wolf to do? Could he sub-embezzle a Highlander's breeks? Could he subtract more than her skin from off the singed cat? Could he peel the core of a rotten apple? Could he pare a grated cheese-rind? Could he flay a skinned flint? Could he fleece a hog after Satan had shaved it as clean as a bantam's egg?

Let no man dare to limit genius, least of all the genius of extortion.

Dr. Wolf screwed comparatively more out of young Frank than did any of the preceding screws. He turned him into a servant of all work, and half starved him; money profit, forty-five pounds out of the sixty pounds, or three-fourths, whereas the others had only bagged one-half. But by this means he got a good servant without wages, and on half a servant's food, clearing twenty-two pounds and twelve pounds in these two items.

Victim of our great national vice and foible, vicariousness, this scion of a noble house, protected in theory by the crown, vicariously sub-protected by the chancellor, sub-vicariously sub-sham-protected by his kin, was really flung unprotected into the fleece market, and might be seen — at the end of the long chain of subs, pros, vices, locos, shams, shuffles, swindles, and lies — shaking the carpets, making the beds, carrying the water, sweeping the rooms, and scouring the sordid vessels, of thirty patients in Drayton House, not one of whom was his equal either in birth or wealth; and of four menials who were all his masters and hard ones. His work was always doing, never done. He was not the least mad nor bad, but merely of feeble intellect all round. Fifty thousand gentlemen's families would have been glad of

him at three hundred pounds a year, and made a son and a brother of him. But he was under the vicarious protection of the lord chancellor. Thin, half starved, threadbare, out at elbows, the universal butt, scoffed at by the very lunatics, and especially ill treated by the attendants whose work he did gratis, he was sworn at, jeered, insulted, cuffed and even kicked, every day of his hard, hard life. And yet he was a gentleman, though a soft one; his hands, his features, his carriage, his address, had all an indefinable stamp of race. How had it outlived such crushing, degrading usage? I don't know; how does a daisy survive the iron roller? Alfred soon found him out, and, to everybody's amazement, especially Frank's, remonstrated gently but resolutely and eloquently, and soon convinced the majority, sane and insane, that a creature so meek and useful merited especial kindness, not cruelty. One keeper, The Robin, *alias* Tom Wales, an ex-prizefighter, was a warm convert to this view. Among the maniacs only one held out, and said contemptuously he couldn't see it.

"Well," said Alfred, "lay a finger on him after this, and I'll lay a hand on you, and aid your intellectual vision."

Rooke and Hayes treated remonstrance with open and galling contempt. Yet the tide of opinion changed so, they did not care to defy it openly; but they bullied poor Beverley now and then on the sly, and he never told. He was too inoffensive for this world. But one day, as Alfred was sitting with his door ajar, writing a letter of earnest expostulation to the commissioners, who had left his first unanswered, he heard Hayes at the head of the stairs call roughly "Frank! Frank!"

"Sir," replied the soft little voice of young Beverley.

"Come, be quick, young shaver."

"I'm coming sir," and up ran Beverley.

"Here, take this tray down-stairs."

"Yes, sir."

"Stop, there's a bit of bread for you." And Hayes chucked him a crust, as one throws it to another man's dog.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Beverley, stooping down for it, and being habitually as hungry as a rat-catcher's tyke, took an eager bite in that position.

"How dare you eat it there?" said Hayes, brutally: "take it to your own crib; come, mizzle." And with that lent him a contemptuous kick behind, which owing to his position sent him off his balance flat on the tray; a glass broke under him; poor young Mr. Beverley uttered a cry of dismay, for he knew Hayes would not own himself the cause; Hayes cursed him for an awkward idiot, and the oath went off into a howl, for Alfred ran out at him brimful of Moses, and with a savage kick in the back and blow on the neck administered simultaneously hurled him headforemost down the stairs. Alighting on the seventh step, he turned a somersault, and bounded like a ball on to the landing below, and there lay stupefied. He picked himself up by slow degrees, and glared round with speechless awe and amazement up at the human thunderbolt that had shot out on him and sent him flying like a feather. He shook his fist, and limped silently away all bruises and curses, to tell Rooke and concert vengeance. Alfred, trembling still with ire, took Beverley to his room (the boy was as white as a sheet), and encouraged him, and made him wash properly, brushed his hair, dressed him in a decent tweed suit he had outgrown, and taking him under his arm, and walking with his own nose haughtily in the air, paraded him up and down the asylum, to show them all the best man in the house respected the poor soft gentleman. Ah, what a grand thing it is to be

young! Beverley clung to his protector too much like a girl, but walked gracefully and kept step, and every now and then looked up at Alfred with a loving adoration, that was sweet yet sad to see. Alfred marched him to Mrs. Archbold, and told his tale; for he knew Hayes would misrepresent it, and get him into trouble. She smiled on the pair; gently deplored her favorite's impetuosity, entreated him not to go fighting with that great monster Rooke, and charmed him by saying, "Well, and Frank *is* a gentleman, when he is dressed like one."

"Isn't he?" said Alfred, eagerly. "And whose fault is it he is not always dressed like one? Whose fault that here's an earl's nephew, 'Boots' in hell?"

"Not yours, Alfred, nor mine," was the honeyed reply.

In vain did Mr. Hayes prefer his complaint to Dr. Wolf. The Archbold had been before him, and the answer was, "Served you right."

These and many other good deeds did Alfred Hardie in Drayton House. But, as the days rolled on, and no answer came from the commissioners, his own anxiety, grief, and dismay left him less and less able to sympathize with the material but smaller wrongs around him. He became silent, dejected.

At last he came to Mrs. Archbold, and said sternly his letters to the commissioners were intercepted.

"I can't believe that," said she. "It is against the law."

So it was; but law and custom are two.

"I am sure of it," said he; "and may the eternal curse of Heaven light on the cowardly traitor and miscreant who has done it." And he stalked gloomily away.

When he left her, she sighed at this imprecation from his lips; but did not repent. "I *can't* part with him," she said, despairingly; "and if I did not stop his poor

dear letters, Wolf would;" and the amorous crocodile shed a tear, and persisted in her double-faced course.

By and by, when she saw him getting thinner and paler, and his bright face downcast and inexpressibly sad, she shared his misery; ay, shed scalding tears for him; yet could not give him up; for her will was as strong as the rest of her was supple; and hers was hot love, but not true love like Julia's.

Perhaps a very subtle observer seeing this man and woman wax pale and spiritless together in one house might have divined her secret. Dr. Wolf then was no such observer, for she made him believe she had a rising penchant for him. He really had a strong one for her.

While Alfred's visible misery pulled at her heart-strings, and sometimes irritated, sometimes melted her, came curious complications; one of which requires preface.

Mrs. Dodd then was not the wife to trust blindly where her poor husband was concerned; she bribed so well that a keeperess in David's first asylum told her David had been harshly used by an attendant. She instantly got Eve Dodd to take him away: and transfer him to a small asylum nearer London, and kept by a Mrs. Ellis. "Women are not cruel to men," said the sagacious Lucy Dodd.

But, alas! if women are not cruel where sex comes in and mimics that wider sentiment, humanity, women are deadly economical. Largely gifted with that household virtue, Mrs. Ellis kept too few servants, and, sure consequence in a madhouse, too many strait-jackets, hobbles, muffs, leg-locks, body-belts, etc. Hence half her patients were frequently kept out of harm's way by cruel restraints administered, not out of hearty cruelty, but female parsimony. Mrs. and Miss Dodd invaded the house one day when the fair economist was out, and found seven

patients out of the twelve kept out of mischief thus: one in a restraint chair, two hobbled like asses, two chained like dogs, and two in strait-waistcoats, and fastened to beds by webbing and straps; amongst the latter David, though quiet as a lamb.

Mrs. Dodd cried over him as if her heart would break, and made Miss Dodd shift him to a large asylum, where I believe he was very well used. But here those dreadful newspapers interfered; a prying into sweet, secluded spots. They diversified Mrs. Dodd's breakfast by informing her that the doctor of this asylum had just killed a patient; the mode of execution bloodless and sure, as became fair science. It was a man between sixty and seventy; an age at which the heart can seldom stand very much shocking or lowering, especially where the brain is diseased. So they placed him in a shower-bath, narrow enough to impede respiration, without the falling water, which of necessity drives out air. In short, a vertical box with holes all round the top.

Here the doctor ordered him a cold shower-bath of unparalleled duration; half an hour. To be followed by an unprecedented dose of tartar emetic. This double-barrelled order given, the doctor went away. (Formula.)

The water was down to forty-five degrees Fahrenheit. Half an hour's shower-bath at that temperature in a roomy bath would kill the youngest and strongest man in Her Majesty's dominions.

For eight and twenty mortal minutes the poor old man stood in this vertical coffin under this cold cascade. Six hundred gallons of icy water were in that his last hour, his last half-hour, discharged upon his devoted head and doomed body.

He had to be helped away from this death-torrent he had walked into in high spirits, poor soul.

Even this change awakened no misgivings, no remorse;

though you or I, or any man or woman picked at hazard out of the streets, would at once have seen that he was dying, he was duly dosed by the fire with four spoonfuls of antimonial tincture — *to mak' sicker.* But even the "destructive art of healing" cannot slay the slain. The old man cheated the emetic; for, before it could hurt him, he died of the bath; and his body told its own sad tale; to use the words of a medical eye-witness, it was "A PIECE OF ALABASTER." The death-torrent had driven the whole circulation from the surface.[1]

Mrs. Dodd was terrified, and in spite of Sampson's assurance that this was the asylum of all others they would not settle another patient in until the matter should have blown over, got Eve Dodd to write to Dr. Wolf, and offer three hundred pounds a year if he would take David at once, and treat him with especial consideration.

He showed this letter triumphantly to Mrs. Archbold, and she, blinded for a moment by feeling, dissuaded him from receiving Captain Dodd. He stared at her. "What, turn away a couple of thousand pounds?"

"But they will come to visit him; and perhaps see *him.*"

"Oh, that can be managed. You must be on your guard: and I'll warn Rooke. I can't turn away money on a chance."

One day Alfred found himself locked into his room. This was unusual: for, though they called him a lunatic

[1] This mode of execution is well known in the United States. They settle refractory prisoners with it periodically. But half an hour is not needed; twenty minutes will do the trick. *Harper's Weekly*, a year or two ago, contained an admirable wood-cut of a negro's execution by water. In this remarkable picture you see the poor darky seated powerless, howling and panting his life away under the deadly cascade: and there stands the stolid turnkey, erect, formal, stiff as a ramrod, pulling the deadly string with a sort of drill exercise air, and no more compunction nor reflection than if he himself was a machine constructed to pull strings or triggers on his own string being pulled by butcher or fool. A picture well studied, and so worth study.

in words, they called him sane by all their acts. He half suspected that the commissioners were in the house.

Had he known who really was in the house, he would have beaten himself to pieces against the door.

At dinner there was a new patient, very mild and silent, with a beautiful large brown eye, like some gentle animal's.

Alfred was very much struck with this eye, and contrived to say a kind word to him after dinner. Finding himself addressed by a gentleman, the new-comer handled his forelock, and made a sea scrape, and announced himself as William Thompson; he added with simple pride, "Able seaman;" then, touching his forelock again, "Just come aboard, your honor." After this, which came off glibly, he was anything but communicative. However, Alfred contrived to extract from him that he was rather glad to leave his last ship, on account of having been constantly impeded there in his duties by a set of lubbers, that clung round him and kept him on deck whenever the first lieutenant ordered him into the top.

The very next day, pacing sadly the dull gravel of his prison yard, Alfred heard a row; and there was the able seaman struggling with the Robin and two other keepers; he wanted to go to his duties in the foretop: to wit, the fork of a high elm-tree in the court-yard. Alfred had half a mind not to interfere. "Who cares for *my* misery?" he said. But his better nature prevailed, and he told the Robin he was sure going up imaginary rigging would do Thompson more good than harm.

On this the men reluctantly gave him a trial, and he went up the tree with wonderful strength and agility, but evident caution. Still Alfred quaked when he crossed his thighs tight over a limb of the tree forty feet from earth, and went carefully and minutely through

the whole process of furling imaginary sails. However, he came down manifestly soothed by the performance, and, singular phenomenon, he was quite cool; and it was the spectators on deck who perspired.

"And what a pleasant voice he has," said Alfred; "it quite charms my ear: it is not like a mad voice. It is like — I'm mad myself."

"And he has got a fiddle, and plays it like a hangel, by all accounts," said the Robin; "only he won't touch it but when he has a mind."

At night Alfred dreamed he heard Julia's sweet, mellow voice speaking to him; and he looked, and lo! it was the able seaman. He could sleep no more, but lay sighing.

Ere the able seaman had been there three days, Mrs. Dodd came unexpectedly to see him: and it was with the utmost difficulty Alfred was smuggled out of the way. Mrs. Archbold saw by her loving anxiety these visits would be frequent, and, unless Alfred was kept constantly locked up, which was repugnant to her, they would meet some day. She knew there are men who ply the trade of spies, and where to find them; she set one of them to watch Mrs. Dodd's house, and learn her habits, in hopes of getting some clew as to when she might be expected.

Now it so happened that, looking for one thing, she found another which gave her great hopes and courage. And then the sight of Alfred's misery tried her patience, and then he was beginning half to suspect her of stopping his letters. Passion, impatience, pity, and calculation, all drove her the same road, and led to an extraordinary scene, so impregnated with the genius of the madhouse — a place where the passions run out to the very end of their tether — that I feel little able to describe it; I will try and indicate it.

AT LAST SHE STOPPED, UNDER A YOUNG CHESTNUT-TREE.

One fine Sunday afternoon, then, she asked Alfred languidly would he like to walk in the country.

"Would I like? Ah, don't trifle with a prisoner," said he, sorrowfully.

She shook her head. "No, no, it will not be a happy walk; Rooke, who hates you, is to follow us with that terrible mastiff, to pull you down if you try to escape. I could not get Dr. Wolf to consent on any other terms; Alfred, let us give up the idea. I fear your rashness."

"No, no, I won't try to escape — from you. I have not seen a blade of grass this six months."

The accomplished dissembler hesitated, yielded. They passed through the yard and out at the back door, which Alfred had so often looked wistfully at; and by and by reached a delicious pasture; a light golden haze streamed across it; nature never seemed so sweet, so divine, to Alfred before; the sun as bright as midsummer, though not the least hot, the air fresh, yet genial, and perfumed with liberty and the smaller flowers of earth; beauty glided rustling by his side, and dark eyes subdued their native fire into softness whenever they turned on him; and scarce fifty yards in the rear hung a bully and a mastiff ready to tear him down if he should break away from beauty's light hand, that rested so timidly on his. He was young, and stout-hearted, and relished his peep of liberty and nature, though blotted by Vulcan and Rooke. He chatted to Mrs. Archbold in good spirits. She answered briefly and listlessly.

At last she stopped under a young chestnut-tree as if overcome with a sudden reflection, and turning half away from him leaned her head and hand upon a bough, and sighed. The attitude was pensive and womanly. He asked her with innocent concern what was the matter; then faintly, should he take her home. All her answer was to press his hand with hers that was disengaged, and, instead of sighing, to cry.

The novice in woman's wiles set himself to comfort her — in vain: to question her — in vain at first, but by degrees she allowed him to learn that it was for him she mourned; and so they proceeded on the old, old plan, the man extorting from the woman bit by bit just so much as she wanted all along to say, and would have poured in a stream if let quite alone.

He drew from his distressed friend that Dr. Wolf for reasons of his own had made special inquiries about the Dodds; that she had fortunately or unfortunately heard of this, and had questioned the person employed, hoping to hear something that might comfort Alfred. "Instead of that," said she, "I find Miss Dodd is like most girls; out of sight is out of mind with her."

"What do you mean?" said Alfred, trembling suddenly.

"Do not ask me. What a weak fool I was to let you see I was unhappy for you!"

"The truth is the truth," gasped Alfred: "tell me at once."

"Must I? I am afraid you will hate me; for I should hate any one who told me your faults. Well, then — if I must — Miss Dodd has a beau."

"It is a lie!" cried Alfred, furiously.

"I wish it was. But she has two, in fact, both of them clergymen: however, one seems the favorite; at least they are engaged to be married; it is Mr. Hurd, the curate of the parish she lives in. By what I hear, she is one of the religious ones: so perhaps that has brought the pair to an understanding."

At these words a cold sickness rushed all over Alfred, beginning at his heart. He stood white and stupefied a moment: then, in the anguish of his heart, broke out into a great and terrible cry: it was like a young lion wounded with a poisoned shaft.

Then he was silent, and stood stock-still, like petrified despair.

Mrs. Archbold was prepared for an outburst: but not of this kind. His anguish was so unlike a woman's that it staggered her. Her good and bad angels, to use an expressive though somewhat too poetical phrase, battled for her. She had an impulse to earn his gratitude for life, to let him out of the asylum ere Julia should be Mrs. Hurd, and even liberty come too late for true love. She looked again at the statue of grief by her side, and burst out crying in earnest.

This was unfortunate. Shallow pity exuding in salt water leaves not enough behind to gush forth in good deeds.

She only tried to undo her own work in part; to comfort him a little with commonplaces: she told him in a soothing whisper there were other women in the world besides this inconstant girl, others who could love him as he deserved.

He made no answer to all she could say, but just waved his hand once impatiently. Petty consolation seemed to sting him.

She drew back discouraged: but only for awhile. He was silent.

With one grand serpentine movement she came suddenly close to him, and, standing half behind him, laid her hand softly on his shoulder, and poured burning love in his ear. "Alfred," she murmured, "we are both unhappy; let us comfort one another. I had pity on you at Silverton House, I pity you now: pity *me* a little in turn; take me out of this dreadful house, out of this revolting life, and let me be with you. Let me be your housekeeper, your servant, your slave. This news that has shocked you so has torn the veil from my eyes; I thought I had cooled my love down to friendship and

tender esteem; but no, now I see you as unhappy as myself, now I can speak and wrong no one, I own, I — O Alfred, my heart burns for you, bleeds for you, yearns for you, sickens for you, dies for you."

"Oh, hush! hush! Mrs. Archbold. You are saying things you will blush for the next moment."

"I blush now, but cannot hush; I have gone too far. And your happiness as well as mine is at stake. No young girl can understand or value such a man as you are: but I, like you, have suffered; I, like you, am constant; I, like you, am warm and tender; at my age a woman's love is bliss to him who can gain it; and I love you with all my soul, Alfred; I worship the ground you walk on, my sweet, sweet boy. Say you the word, dearest, and I will bribe the servants, and get the keys, and sacrifice my profession forever to give you liberty (see how sweet the open face of nature is, sweeter than anything on earth but love); and all I ask is a little, little of your heart in return. Give me a chance to make you mine forever; and, if I fail, treat me as I shall deserve; desert me at once; and then I'll never reproach you; I'll only die for you; as I have lived for you ever since I first saw your heavenly face."

The passionate woman paused at last, but her hot cheek and heaving bosom and tender, convulsive hand prolonged the pleading.

I am afraid few men of her own age would have resisted her; for voice and speech and all were burning, melting, and winning: and then so reasonable, lads; she did not stipulate for constancy.

But Alfred turned round to her blushing and sorrowful. "For shame!" he said; "this is not love: you abuse that sacred word. Indeed, if you had ever really loved, you would have pitied me and Julia long ago, and respected our love; and saved us by giving me my free-

dom long ago. I am not a fool: do you think I don't know that you are my jailer, and the cunningest and most dangerous of them all?"

"You cruel, ungrateful!" she sobbed.

"No; I am not ungrateful either," said he, more gently. "You have always come between me and that kind of torture which most terrifies vulgar souls; and I thank you for it. Only, if you had also pitied the deeper anguish of my heart, I should thank you more still. As it is, I forgive you for the share you have had in blasting my happiness for life; and nobody shall ever know what you have been mad enough in an unguarded moment to say; but for pity's sake talk no more of love, to mock my misery."

Mrs. Archbold was white with ire long before he had done this sentence. "You insolent creature!" said she; "you spurn my love; you shall feel my hate."

"So I conclude," said he, coldly: "such love as yours is hard by hate."

"It is," said she: "and I know how I'll combine the two. To-day I loved you, and you spurned me; ere long you shall love me, and I'll despise you; and not spurn you."

"I don't understand you," said Alfred, feeling rather uneasy.

"What," said she, "don't you see how the superior mind can fascinate the inferior? Look at Frank Beverley; how he follows you about and fawns on you, like a little dog."

"I prefer his sort of affection to yours."

"A gentleman and a man would have kept that to himself; but you are neither one nor the other; or you would have taken my offer, and then run away from me the next day, you fool. A man betrays a woman; he doesn't insult her. Ah, you admire Frank's affection; well, you

shall imitate it. You couldn't love me like a man; you shall love me like a dog."

"How will you manage that, pray?" he inquired with a sneer.

"I'll drive you mad."

She hissed this fiendish threat out between her white teeth.

"Ay, sir," she said, "hitherto your reason has only encountered men. You shall see now what an insulted woman can do. A lunatic you shall be ere long, and then I'll make you love me, dote on me, follow me about for a smile: and then I'll leave off hating you, and love you once more, but not the way I did five minutes ago."

At this furious threat Alfred ground his teeth, and said, "Then I give you my honor that the moment I see my reason the least shaken, I'll kill *you:* and so save myself from the degradation of being your lover on any terms."

"Threaten your own sex with that," said the Archbold, contemptuously; "you may kill me whenever you like; and the sooner the better. Only, if you don't do it very quickly, you shall be my property, my brain-sick, love-sick slave."

CHAPTER IX.

After a defiance so bitter and deadly, Alfred naturally drew away from his inamorata. But she, boiling with love and hate, said bitterly, "We need not take Mr. Rooke into our secrets. Come, sir, your arm!"

He stuck it out ungraciously, and averted his head; she took it, suppressed with difficulty a petty desire to pinch, and so walked by his side; he was as much at his ease as if promenading jungles with a panther. She felt him quiver with repugnance under her soft hand, and prolonged the irritating contact. She walked very slowly, and told him with much meaning she was waiting for a signal. "Till then," said she, "we will keep one another company," biting the word with her teeth as it went out.

By and by a window was opened in the asylum, and a table-cloth hung out. Mrs. Archbold pointed it out to Alfred; he stared at it; and after that she walked him rapidly home in silence. But, as soon as the door was double-locked on him, she whispered triumphantly in his ear, —

"Your mother-in-law was expected to-day; that signal was to let me know she was gone."

"My mother-in-law!" cried the young man, and tried in vain to conceal his surprise and agitation.

"Ay; your mother-in-law that shall never be — Mrs. Dodd."

"Mrs. Dodd here!" said Alfred, clasping his hands. Then he reflected, and said coolly, "It is false; what should she come here for?"

"To see your father-in-law."

"My father-in-law? What, is he here, too?" said Alfred, with an incredulous sneer.

"Yes, the raving maniac that calls himself Thompson, and that you took to from the first; he is your precious father-in-law — that shall never be."

Alfred was now utterly amazed and bewildered. Mrs. Archbold eyed him in silent scorn.

"Poor man," said he, at last, and hung his head sorrowfully. "No wonder then his voice went so to my heart. How strange it all is! and how will it all end?"

"In your being a madman instead of an insolent fool!" hissed the viper.

At this moment Beverley appeared at the end of the yard. Mrs. Archbold whistled him to her like a dog. He came running zealously. "Who was that called while I was out?" she inquired.

"A polite lady, madam: she said sir to me and thanked me."

"That sounds like Mrs. Dodd," said the Archbold, quietly.

"Ah, but," continued Frank, "there was another with her: a beautiful young lady; oh, so beautiful!"

"Miss Julia Dodd," said the Archbold, grimly.

Alfred panted, and his eyes roved wildly in search of a way to escape and follow her; she could not be far off.

"Anybody else, Frank?" inquired Mrs. Archbold.

"No more ladies, madam; but there was a young gentleman all in black; I think he was a clergyman or a butler."

"Ah, that was her husband that is to be; that was Mr. Hurd. She can go nowhere without him, not even to see her old beau."

At these words, every one of them an adder, Alfred turned on her furiously, and his long arm shot out of its

own accord, and the fingers opened like an eagle's claw. She saw and understood, but never blenched. Her vindictive eye met his dilating, flashing orbs unflinchingly.

"You pass for a woman," he said, "and I am too wretched for anger." He turned from her with a deep, convulsive sob, and, almost staggering, leaned his brow against the wall of the house.

She had done what no man had as yet succeeded in; she had broken his spirit. And here a man would have left him alone. But the rejected beauty put her lips to his ear, and whispered into them, "This is only the beginning." Then she left him, and went to his room and stole all his paper and pens and ink, and his very Aristotle. He was to have no occupation now, except to brood and brood and brood.

As for Alfred, he sat down upon a bench in the yard a broken man: up to this moment he had hoped his Julia was as constant as himself. But no; either she had heard he was mad, and with the universal credulity had believed it, or perhaps, not hearing from him at all, believed herself forsaken, and was consoling herself with a clergyman. Jealousy did not as yet infuriate Alfred. Its first effect resembled that of a heavy blow. Little Beverley found him actually sick, and ran to the Robin. The ex-prizefighter brought him a thimbleful of brandy, but he would not take it. "Ah, no, my friends," he said, "that cannot cure me; it is not my stomach; it is my heart. Broken, broken!"

The Robin retired muttering. Little Beverley kneeled down beside him and kissed his hand with a devotion that savored of the canine. Yet it was tender, and the sinking heart clung to it. "O Frank!" he cried, "my Julia believes me mad or thinks me false or something, and she will marry another before I can get out to tell her all I have endured was for loving her. What shall

I do? God protect my reason! What will become of me?"

He moaned, and young Frank sorrowed over him till the harsh voice of Rooke summoned him to some menial duty. This discharged, he came running back, and sat on the bench beside his crushed benefactor without saying a word. At last, he delivered this sapient speech: "I see. You want to get out of this place."

Alfred only sighed hopelessly.

"Then I must try and get you out," said Frank. Alfred shook his head.

"Just let me think," said Frank, solemnly; and he sat silent looking like a young owl; for thinking soon puzzled him, and elicited his intellectual weakness; whereas in a groove of duties he could go as smoothly as half the world, and but for his official, officious protector, might just as well have been boots at the Swan, as boots and chambermaid at the Wolf.

So now force and cunning had declared war on Alfred, and feebleness in person enlisted in his defence. His adversary lost no time; that afternoon Rooke told him he was henceforth to occupy a double-bedded room with another patient.

"If he should be violent in the middle of the night, sing out, and we will come — if we hear you," said the keeper, with a malicious smile.

The patient turned out to be the able seaman. Here Mrs. Archbold aimed a double stroke: to shake Alfred's nerves, and show him how very mad his proposed father-in-law was. She thought that, if he could once be forced to realize this, it might reconcile him to not marrying the daughter.

The first night David did get up and paraded an imaginary deck for four mortal hours. Alfred's sleep was broken, but he said nothing; and David turned in again, his watch completed.

Not a day passed now but a blow was struck. Nor was the victim passive; debarred writing materials, he cut the rims off several copies of the *Times*, and secreted them; then catching sight of some ink-blots on the back of Frank's clothes-brushes, scraped them carefully off, melted them in a very little water, and with a toothpick scrawled his wrongs to the commissioners; he rolled the slips round a half-crown, and wrote outside, "Good Christian, keep this half-crown, and take the writing to the Lunacy Commissioners at Whitehall, for pity's sake." This done, he watched, and when nobody was looking flung his letter, so weighted, over the gates; he heard it fall on the public road.

Another day he secreted a spoonful of black-currant preserve, diluted it with a little water, and wrote a letter, and threw it into the road as before. Another day, hearing the Robin express disgust at the usage to which he was now subjected, he drew him apart, and offered him a hundred pounds to get him out. Now the ex-prize-fighter was rather a tender-hearted fellow, and a great detester of foul play. What he saw made him now side heartily with Alfred; and all he wanted was to be indemnified for his risk.

He looked down and said, "You see, sir, I have a wife and child to think of."

Alfred offered him two hundred pounds.

"That is more than enough, sir," said the Robin; "but you see I can't do it alone. I must have a pal in it. Could you afford as much to Garrett? He is the likeliest; I've heard him say as much as that he was sick of the business."

Alfred jumped at the proposal: he would give them two hundred apiece.

"I'll sound him," said the Robin; "don't you speak to him whatever. He might blow the gaff. I must

begin by making him drunk: then he'll tell me his real mind."

One fine morning the house was made much cleaner than usual; the rotatory chair, in which they used to spin a maniac like a teetotum, the restraint chairs, and all the paraphernalia were sent into the stable and so disposed that, even if found, they would look like things scorned and dismissed from service; for Wolf, mind you, professed the non-restraint system.

Alfred asked what was up, and found all this was in preparation for the quarterly visit of the commissioners; a visit intended to be a surprise, but Drayton House always knew when they were coming, and the very names of the two thunderbolts that thought to surprise them.

Mrs. Archbold communicated her knowledge in off-hand terms. "It is only two old women: Bartlett and Terry."

The gentlemen thus flatteringly heralded arrived next day. One an aged, infirm man, with a grand benevolent head, bald front, and silver hair, and the gold-headed cane of his youth, now a dignified crutch; the other an ordinary-looking little chap enough, with this merit: he was what he looked. They had a long interview with Mrs. Archbold first, for fear they should carry a naked eye into the asylum; Mr. Bartlett, acting on instructions, very soon inquired about Alfred; Mrs. Archbold's face put on friendly concern directly. "I am sorry to say he is not so well as he was a fortnight ago; not nearly so well. We have given him walks in the country, too, but I regret to say they did him no real good; he came back much excited, and now he shuns the other patients, which he used not to do." In short, she gave them the impression that Alfred was a moping melancholiac.

"Well, I had better see him," said Mr. Bartlett, "just to satisfy the Board." Alfred was accordingly sent for, and asked with an indifferent air how he was.

He said he was very well in health, but in sore distress of mind at his letters to the commissioners being intercepted by Mrs. Archbold or Dr. Wolf.

Mrs. Archbold smiled pityingly. Mr. Bartlett caught her glance, and concluded this was one of the patient's delusions. (Formula).

Alfred surprised the glances, and said, "You can hardly believe this, because the act is illegal. But a great many illegal acts, that you never detect, are done in asylums. However, it is not a question of surmise; I sent four letters in the regular way since I came. Here are their several dates. Pray make a note to inquire whether they have reached Whitehall or not."

"Oh, certainly, to oblige you," said Mr. Bartlett, and made the note.

Mrs. Archbold looked rather discomposed at that.

"And now, gentlemen," said Alfred, "since Mrs. Archbold has had a private interview, which I see she has abused to poison your mind against me, I claim, as simple justice, a private interview to disabuse you."

"You are the first patient ever told me to walk out of my own drawing-room," said Mrs. Archbold, rising white with ire and apprehension, and sweeping out of the room.

By this piece of female petulance, she gave the enemy a point in the game; for, if she had insisted on staying, Mr. Bartlett was far too weak to have dismissed her. As it was, he felt shocked at Alfred's rudeness; and so small a thing as justice did not in his idea counterbalance so great a thing as discourtesy; so he listened to Alfred's tale with the deadly apathy of an unwilling hearer. "Pour on; I will endure," as poor Lear says.

As for Dr. Terry, he was pictorial, but null, effete,

emptied of brains by all-scooping time. If he had been detained that day at Drayton House, and Frank Beverley sent back in his place to Whitehall, it would have mattered little to him, less to the nation, and nothing to mankind.

At last Mr. Bartlett gave Alfred some hopes he was taking in the truth; for he tore a leaf out of his memorandum-book, wrote on it, and passed it to Dr. Terry. The ancient took it with a smile, and seemed to make an effort to master it, but failed; it dropped simultaneously from his finger and his mind.

Not a question was put to Alfred, so he was fain to come to an end; he withdrew suddenly, and caught Mrs. Archbold at the keyhole. "Noble adversary!" said he, and stalked away, and hid himself hard by; and no sooner did the inspectors come out, and leave the coast clear, than he darted in and looked for the paper Mr. Bartlett had passed to Dr. Terry.

He found it on the floor, and took it eagerly up; and, full of hope and expectation, read these words: —

"What is the name of the stuff the matron's gown is made of? I should like to buy Mrs. Bartlett one like it."

Alfred stood and read this again and again. He searched for some hidden, symbolical meaning in the words. High minded, and deeply impressed with his own wrongs, he could not conceive a respectable man, paid fifteen hundred a year to spy out wrongs, being so heartless hard as to write this single comment during the earnest recital of a wrong so gigantic as his. Poor Alfred learned this to his cost, that to put small men into great places is to create monsters. When he had realized the bitter truth, he put the stony-hearted paper in his pocket, crept into the yard, and sat down, and, for all he could do, scalding tears ran down his cheeks.

"*Homunculi quanti sunt!*" he sobbed; "*homunculi quanti sunt!*"

Presently he saw Dr. Terry come wandering towards him alone. The Archbold had not deigned to make him safe; senectitude had done that. Alfred, all heart-sick as he was, went to the old gentleman out of veneration for the outside of his head — which was Shakespearian — and pity for his bodily infirmity, and offered him an arm. The doctor thanked him sweetly, and said, "Pray, young man, have you anything to communicate?"

Then Alfred saw that the ancient man had already forgotten his face, and so looking at him with that rare instrument of official inspection, the naked eye, had seen he was sane, and consequently taken him for a keeper.

How swiftly the mind can roam, and from what a distance gather the materials of a thought! Flashed like lightning through Alfred's mind this line from one of his pets, the Greek philosophers: —

"*Και τουτο μεγιστης εστι τεχνης αγαθα ποιεῖν τα κακα.*"

"And this is the greatest stroke of art, to turn an evil into a good."

Now the feebleness of this aged inspector was an evil; the thing then was to turn it into a good. Shade of Plato, behold how thy disciple worked thee! "Sir," said he, sinking his voice mysteriously, "I have, but I am a poor man; you won't say I told you; it's as much as my place is worth."

"Confidence, strict confidence," replied Nestor, going over beaten tracks; for he had kept many a queer secret with the loyalty which does his profession so much honor.

"Then, sir, there's a young gentleman confined here, who is no more mad than you and I; and never was mad."

"You don't say so."

"That I do, sir. And they know they are doing wrong,

sir, for they stop all his letters to the commissioners; and that is unlawful, you know. Would you like to take a note of it all, sir?"

The old fogy said he thought he should, and groped vaguely for his note-book. He extracted it at last like a loose tooth, fumbled with it, and dropped it. Alfred picked it up fuming inwardly.

The ancient went to write, but his fingers were weak and hesitating, and by this time he had half forgotten what he was going to say. Alfred's voice quavered with impatience; but he fought it down, and offered as coolly as he could to write it for him. The offer was accepted, and he wrote down in a feigned hand, very clear: —

DRAYTON HOUSE, Oct. 5.

A sane patient, Alfred Hardie, confined here from interested motives. Has written four letters to the commissioners, all believed to be intercepted. Communicated to me in confidence by an attendant in the house. Refer to the party himself, and his correspondence with the commissioners from Dr. Wycherley's; also to Thomas Wales, another attendant; and to Dr. Wycherley; also to Dr. Eskell and Mr. Abbott, Commissioners of Lunacy.

After this stroke of address, Alfred took the first opportunity of leaving him, and sent Frank Beverley to him.

Thus Alfred, alarmed by the hatred of Mrs. Archbold, and racked with jealousy, exerted all his intelligence and played many cards for liberty. One he kept in reserve, and a trump card, too. Having now no ink nor coloring matter, he did not hesitate, but out penknife, up sleeve, and drew blood from his arm, and with it wrote once more to the commissioners, but kept this letter hidden for an ingenious purpose. What that purpose was, my reader shall divine.

CHAPTER X.

We left Julia Dodd a district visitor. Working in a dense parish she learned the depths of human misery, bodily and mental.

She visited an honest widow, so poor that she could not afford a farthing dip, but sat in the dark. When friends came to see her they sometimes brought a candle to talk by.

She visited a cripple who often thanked God sincerely for leaving her the use of one thumb.

She visited a poor creature who for sixteen years had been afflicted with a tumor in the neck, and had lain all those years on her back with her head in a plate, the heat of a pillow being intolerable. Julia found her longing to go, and yet content to stay; and praising God in all the lulls of that pain, which was her companion day and night.

But were I to enumerate the ghastly sights, the stifling, loathsome odors, the vulgar horrors upon horrors, this refined young lady faced, few of my readers would endure on paper, for love of truth, what she endured in reality for love of suffering humanity and of Him whose servant she aspired to be.

Probably such sacrifices of selfish ease and comfort are never quite in vain; they tend in many ways to heal our own wounds. I won't say that bodily suffering is worse than mental, but it is realized far more vividly by a spectator. The grim, heart-breaking sights she saw arrayed Julia's conscience against her own grief; the more so, when she found some of her most afflicted ones

resigned, and even grateful. "What," said she, "can they, all rags, disease, and suffering, bow so cheerfully to the will of Heaven, and have I the wickedness, the impudence, to repine?"

And then, happier than most district visitors, she was not always obliged to look on helpless, or to confine her consolations to good words. Mrs. Dodd was getting on famously in her groove. She was high in the confidence of Cross & Co., and was inspecting eighty ladies, as well as working; her salary and profits together were not less than five hundred pounds a year, and her one luxury was charity, and Julia its minister. She carried a good honest basket, and there you might see her Bible wedged in with wine and meat, and tea and sugar; and still, as these melted in her round, a little spark of something warm would sometimes come in her own sick heart. Thus by degrees she was attaining, not earthly happiness, but a grave and pensive composure.

Yet across it gusts of earthly grief came sweeping often; but these she hid till she was herself again.

To her mother and brother she was kinder, sweeter, and dearer, if possible, than ever. They looked on her as a saint; but she knew better, and used to blush with honest shame when they called her so. "Oh, don't, pray don't," she would say with unaffected pain. "Love me as if I was an angel, but do not praise me; that turns my eyes inward and makes me see myself. I am not a Christian yet, nor anything like one."

Returning one day from her duties very tired, she sat down to take off her bonnet in her own room, and presently heard snatches of an argument that made her prick those wonderful little ears of hers which could almost hear through a wall. The two concluding sentences were a key to the whole dialogue.

"Why disturb her?" said Mrs. Dodd. "She is getting

better of 'the wretch;' and my advice is, say nothing. What harm can that do?"

"But then it is so unfair, so ungenerous, to keep anything from the poor girl that may concern her."

At this moment Julia came softly into the room with her curiosity hidden under an air of angelic composure.

Her mother asked after Mrs. Beecher, to draw her into conversation. She replied quietly that Mrs. Beecher was no better, but very thankful for the wine Mrs. Dodd had sent her. This answer given, she went without any apparent hurry and sat by Edward, and fixed two loving, imploring eyes on him in silence. O subtle sex! This feather was to turn the scale, and make him talk unquestioned. It told. She was close to him too, and mamma at the end of the room.

"Look here, Ju," said he, putting his hands in his pockets, "we two have always been friends as well as brother and sister; and somehow it does not seem like a friend to keep things dark." Then to Mrs. Dodd, "She is not a child, mother, after all; and how can it be wrong to tell her the truth, or right to suppress the truth? — Well, then, Ju, there's an advertisement in the *'Tiser*, and it's a regular riddle. Now mind, I don't really think there is anything in it; but it is a droll coincidence, very droll; if it wasn't there are ladies present, and one of them a district visitor, I would say, d——d droll. So droll," continued he, getting warm, "that I should like to punch the advertiser's head."

"Let me see it, dear," said Julia. "I dare say it is nothing worth punching about."

"There," said Edward. "I've marked it."

Julia took the paper, and her eye fell on this short advertisement: —

AILEEN AROON. — DISTRUST APPEARANCES.

Looking at her with some anxiety, they saw the paper give one sharp rustle in her hands, and then quiver a little. She bowed her head over it, and everything seemed to swim; but she never moved. They could neither of them see her face; she defended herself with the paper. The letters cleared again, and, still hiding her face, she studied and studied the advertisement.

"Come, tell us what you think of it," said Edward. "Is it anything, or a mere coincidence?"

"It is a pure coincidence," said Mrs. Dodd, with an admirable imitation of cool confidence.

Julia said nothing; but she now rose and put both arms round Edward's neck, and kissed him fervidly again and again, holding the newspaper tight all the time.

"There," said Mrs. Dodd, "see what you have done."

"Oh, it is all right," said Edward, cheerfully. "The British fireman is getting hugged no end. Why, what is the matter? have you got the hiccough, Ju?"

"No, no. You are a true brother. I knew all along that he would explain all if he was alive; and he *is* alive." So saying she kissed the '*Tiser* violently more than once; then fluttered away with it to her own room, ashamed to show her joy, and yet not able to hide it.

Mrs. Dodd shook her head sorrowfully; and Edward began to look rueful, and doubt whether he had done wisely. I omit the discussion that followed. But the next time his duties permitted him to visit them, Mrs. Dodd showed him the '*Tiser* in her turn, and with her pretty white taper finger, and such a look, pointed to the following advertisement: —

> AILEEN AROON. — I *do* DISTRUST APPEARANCES. But if you ever loved me explain them at once. I have something for you from your dear sister.

"Poor, simple girl!" said Mrs. Dodd, "not to see that, if he could explain at all, he *would* explain, not go advertising an enigma after acting a mystification. And to think of my innocent dove putting in that she had something for him from his sister; a mighty temptation for such a wretch!"

"It was wonderfully silly," said Edward, "and such a clever girl, too; but you ladies can't stick to one thing at a time, begging your pardon, mamma."

Mrs. Dodd took no notice of this remark.

"To see her lower herself so!" she said. "O my son, I am mortified." And Mrs. Dodd leaned her cheek against Edward's and sighed.

"Now don't you cry, mammy," said he, sorrowfully. "I'll break every bone in his skin for your comfort."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Mrs. Dodd, anxiously; "what, are you not aware she would hate you?"

"Hate me? her brother?"

"She would hate us all if we laid a finger on that wretch. Pray interfere no more, love; foolish child, talking to me about women, and it is plain you know nothing of their hearts, and a good thing *for* you." She then put on maternal authority (nobody could do it more easily) and solemnly forbade all violence.

He did not venture to contradict her now, but cherished his resolution all the more, and longed for the hour when he might take "the wretch" by the throat and chastise him, the more publicly the better.

Now the above incident that revealed Julia's real heart, which she had been hiding more or less all this time from those who could not sympathize with her, took eventually a turn unfavorable to "the wretch." So he might well be called. Her great and settled fear had always been that Alfred was dead. Under the immediate influence of his father's cunning, she had for a

moment believed he was false; but so true and loving a heart could not rest in that opinion. In true love, so long as there is one grain of uncertainty, there is a world of faith and credulous ingenuity. So, as Alfred had never been seen since, as nobody could say he was married to another, there was a grain of uncertainty as to his unfaithfulness, and this her true heart magnified to a mountain.

But now matters wore another face. She was sure he had written the advertisement. Who but he, out of the few that take the words of any song to heart, admired "Aileen Aroon"? Who but he, out of the three or four people who might possibly care for that old song, had appearances to explain away? and who but he knew they took in the *Morning Advertiser?* She waited then for the explanation she had invited. She read the advertising column every day over and over.

Not a word more.

Then her womanly pride was deeply wounded. What, had she courted an explanation where most ladies would have listened to none, and courted it in vain?

Her high spirit revolted. Her heart swelled against the repeated insults she had received: this last one filled the bitter cup too high.

And then her mother came in and assured her he had only inserted that advertisement to keep her in his power. "He has heard you are recovering, and are admired by others more worthy of your esteem."

Julia cried bitterly at these arguments, for she could no longer combat them.

And Mr. Hurd was very attentive and kind. And when he spoke to Julia, and Julia turned away, her eye was sure to meet Mrs. Dodd's eye imploring her secretly not to discourage the young man too much. And so she was gently pulled by one, and gently thrust by

another, away from her first lover and towards his successor.

It is an old, old story. Fate seems to exhaust its malice on our first love. For the second, the road is smoother. Matters went on so some weeks, and it was perfectly true that Mr. Hurd escorted both ladies one day to Drayton House, at Julia's request, and not Mrs. Dodd's. Indeed, the latter lady was secretly hurt at his being allowed to come with them.

One Saturday afternoon Mrs. Dodd went alone to Drayton House by appointment. David was like a lamb, but, as usual, had no knowledge of her. Mrs. Archbold told her a quiet, intelligent patient had taken a great fancy to him, and she thought this was adding much to his happiness. "May I see him to thank him?" asked Mrs. Dodd. "Oh, certainly," said Mrs. Archbold: "I'll inquire for him." She went out, but soon returned, saying, "He is gone out for a walk with the head keeper: we give him as much air and amusement as we can; we hope soon to send him out altogether, cured." — "Truly kind and thoughtful," said Mrs. Dodd. Soon after, she kissed Mrs. Archbold, and pressed a valuable brooch upon her, and then took leave. However, at the gate she remembered her parasol. Mrs. Archbold said she would go back for it. Mrs. Dodd would not hear of that: Mrs. Archbold insisted, and settled the question by going. She was no sooner in the house, than young Frank Beverley came running to Mrs. Dodd, and put the missing parasol officiously into her hand. "Oh, thank you, sir," said she: "will you be so kind as to tell Mrs. Archbold I have it?" And with this they parted, and the porter opened the gate to her, and she got into her hired cab. She leaned her head back, and, as usual, was lost in the sorrowful thoughts of what had been, and what now was. Poor wife! each visit to Drayton House

opened her wound afresh. On reaching the stones, there was a turnpike. This roused her up: she took out her purse and paid it. As she drew back to her seat, she saw out of the tail of her feminine eye the edge of something white under her parasol. She took up the parasol, and found a written paper pinned on to it: she detached this paper, and examined it all over with considerable curiosity. It consisted of a long slip about an inch and a quarter broad, rolled like tape, and tied with packthread. She could not see the inside, of course, but she read the superscription: it was firmly but clearly written, in red ink apparently.

Of the words I shall only say at present that they were strong and simple, and that their effect on the swift intelligence and tender heart of Mrs. Dodd was overpowering. They knocked at her heart: they drew from her an audible cry of pity more eloquent than a thousand speeches; and the next moment she felt a little faint, for she knew now the appeal was not in red ink, but in something very fit to pass between the heart of woe and the heart of pity. She smelt her salts, and soon recovered that weakness; and next her womanly bosom swelled so with the milk of human kindness that her breath came short. After a little struggle, she gushed out aloud, "Ah, that I will, poor soul! this very moment."

Now, by this time she was close to her own house.

She stopped the cab at her door, and asked the driver if his horse was fresh enough to carry her to the Board of Lunacy; "It is at Whitehall, sir," said she. "Lord bless you, ma'am!" said the cabman, "Whitehall? why, my mare would take you to Whitechapel and back in an hour, let alone Whitehall."

Reassured on that point, Mrs. Dodd went in just to give the servant an order; but as she stood in the

passage she heard her children's voices, and also a friend's, — the genial, angry tones of Alexander Sampson, M.D.

She thought, "Oh, I *must* just show them all the paper, before I go with it;" and so after a little buzz about dinner and things with Sarah, mounted the stairs, and arrived among them singularly *apropos*, as it happened.

Men like Sampson, who make many foes, do also make stancher friends than ever the hare does, and are faithful friends themselves. The boisterous doctor had stuck to the Dodds in all their distresses; and if they were ever short of money, it certainly was not his fault, for almost his first word, when he found them in a lodging, was, —

"Now, ye'll be wanting a chick. Gimme pen and ink, and I'll just draw ye one: for a hundre."

This being declined politely by Mrs. Dodd, he expostulated, —

"Mai — dear — madam, how on airth can ye go on in such a place as London without a chick?"

He returned to the charge at his next visit, and scolded her well for her pride. "Who iver hard of refusing a chick? a small, inoffensive chick, from an old friend like me? Come now, behave! Just a wee chick: I'll let y' off for fifty."

"Give us your company and your friendship," said Mrs. Dodd: "we value them both above gold: we will not rob your dear children, while we have as many fingers on our hands as other people."

On the present occasion Dr. Sampson, whose affectionate respect for the leading London physicians has already displayed itself, was inveighing specially against certain specialists, whom, in the rapidity of his lusty eloquence, he called the Mad Ox. He favored Julia and

Edward with a full account of the maniform enormities he had detected them in during thirty years' practice, and so descended to his present grievance. A lady, an old friend of his, was being kept in a certain asylum month after month because she had got money and relations, and had once been delirious. "And why was she delirious? because she had a brain-fever: she got well in a fortnight." This lady had thrown a letter over the wall addressed to him: somebody had posted it; he had asked the commissioners to let him visit her: they had declined for the present. "Yon Board always sides with the strong against the weak," said he. So now he had bribed the gardener, and made a midnight assignation with the patient, and was going to it with six stout fellows to carry her off by force. "That is my recipe for alleged insanity," said he. "The business will be more like a mejæval knight carrying off a namorous nun out of a convint, than a good physician saving a pashint from the Mad Ox. However, Mrs. Saampson's in the secret: I daunt say sh' approves it, for she doesn't. She says, 'Go quietly to the Board o' Commissioners.' Sis I, 'My dear, boards are a sort of cattle that go too slow for Saampson, and no match at all for the Mad Ox.'"

At this conjuncture, or soon after, Mrs. Dodd came in with her paper in her hand, a little flurried for once, and, after a hasty courtesy, said, —

"O Dr. Sampson! O my dears! what wickedness there is in the world! I'm going to Whitehall this moment: only look at what was pinned on my parasol at Drayton House."

The writing passed from hand to hand, and left the readers looking very gravely at one another. Julia was quite pale and horror-stricken. All were too deeply moved, and even shocked, to make any commonplace

comment, for it looked and read like a cry from heart to hearts: —

> "*If you are a Christian, if you are human, pity a sane man here confined by fraud, and take this to the Board of Lunacy at Whitehall. Torn by treachery from her I love, my letters all intercepted, pens and paper kept from me, I write this with a toothpick and my blood on a rim of 'The Times.' O God, direct it to some one who has suffered, and can feel for another's agony.*"

Dr. Sampson was the first to speak. "There," said he, under his breath, "didn't I tell you? This man is sane. There's sanity in every line."

"Well, but," said Edward, "do you mean to say that in the present day" —

"Mai — dearr — sirr, mankind niver changes. Whativer the muscles of man *can* do in the light, the mind and conscience of man will consent to do in the dark."

Julia said never a word.

Mrs. Dodd, too, was for action, not for talk. She bade them all a hasty adieu, and went on her good work.

Ere she got to the street-door she heard a swift rustle behind her; and it was Julia flying down to her, all glowing and sparkling with her old impetuosity, that had seemed dead forever. "No, no!" she cried, panting with generous emotion, "it is to me it was sent. *I* am torn from him I love, and by some treachery, I dare say; and *I* have suffered, oh, you shall never know what I have suffered! Give it *me*, oh, pray, pray, pray, give it *me*. *I'll* take it to Whitehall."

CHAPTER XI.

If we could always know at the time what we are doing!

Two ladies carried a paper to Whitehall out of charity to a stranger.

Therein the elder was benefactress to a man she never spoke of but as "the wretch;" the younger held her truant bridegroom's heart, I may say, in her hand all the road and was his protectress. Neither recognized the handwriting: for no man can write his own hand with a toothpick.

They reached Whitehall, and were conducted up-stairs to a gentleman of pleasant aspect but powerful brow, seated in a wilderness of letters.

He waved his hand, and a clerk set them chairs; he soon after laid down his pen, and leaned gravely forward to hear their business. They saw they must waste no time; Julia looked at her mother, rose, and took Alfred's missive to his desk, and handed it him with one of her eloquent looks grave and pitiful. He seemed struck by her beauty and her manner.

"It was pinned on my parasol, sir, by a poor prisoner at Drayton House," said Mrs. Dodd.

"Oh, indeed," said the gentleman, and began to read the superscription with a cold and wary look. But thawed visibly as he read. He opened the missive, and ran his eye over it. The perusal moved him not a little: a generous flush mounted to his brow; he rang the bell sharply. A clerk answered it: the gentleman wrote on

a slip of paper and said earnestly, "Bring me every letter that is signed with that name, and all our correspondence about him."

He then turned to Mrs. Dodd, and put her a few questions, which drew out the main facts I have just related. The papers were now brought in. "Excuse me a moment," said he, and ran over them. "I believe the man is sane," said he, "and that you will have enabled us to baffle a conspiracy, a heartless conspiracy."

"We do hope he will be set free, sir," said Mrs. Dodd, piteously.

"He shall, madam, if it is as I suspect. I will stay here all night but I will master this case; and lay it before the Board myself without delay."

Julia looked at her mother, and then asked if it would be wrong to inquire the poor gentleman's name?"

"Humph!" said the official; "I ought not to reveal that without his consent. But stay! he will owe you much, and it really seems a pity he should not have an opportunity of expressing his gratitude. Perhaps you will favor me with your address: and trust to my discretion; of course, if he does not turn out as sane as he seems, I shall never let him know it."

Mrs. Dodd then gave her address; and she and Julia went home with a glow about the heart selfish people, thank Heaven, never know.

Unconsciously these two had dealt their enemy and Alfred's a heavy blow; had set the train to a mine. Their friend at the office was a man of another stamp than Alfred had fallen in with.

Meantime Alfred was subjected to hourly mortifications and irritations. He guessed the motive, and tried to baffle it by calm self-possession: but this was far more difficult than heretofore, because his temper was now exacerbated and his fibre irritated by broken sleep (of this

poor David was a great cause), and his heart inflamed and poisoned by that cruel, that corroding passion, jealousy.

To think, that while he was in prison, a rival was ever at his Julia's ear, making more and more progress in her heart! This corroder was his bitter companion day and night; and perhaps of all the maddeners human cunning could have invented, this was the worst. It made his temples beat, and his blood run boiling poison. Indeed, there were times when he was so distempered by passion that homicide seemed but an act of justice, and suicide a legitimate relief. For who could go on forever carrying hell in his bosom up and down a prison yard? He began to go alone: to turn impatiently from the petty troubles and fathomless egotism of those afflicted persons he had hitherto forced his sore heart to pity. Pale, thin, and woe-begone, he walked the weary gravel, like the lost ones in that Hall of Eblis, whose hearts were a devouring fire. Even an inspector with a naked eye would no longer have distinguished him at first sight from a lunatic of the unhappiest class, the melancholiac.

Ipse suum cor edens hominum vestigia vitans.

Mrs. Archbold looked on and saw this sad sight not with the pity it would once have caused, but with a sort of bitter triumph lightened by no pleasure, and darkened by the shadow of coming remorse. Yet up to this time she had shown none of that inconstancy of purpose which marks her sex; while she did go far to justify the poet's charge: —

Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned.

Rooke had a hint to provoke Alfred to violence such as would justify them in subjecting so popular a patient to bodily restraint, composing draughts, and other quick

maddeners. Rooke entered into the game zealously from two motives: he was devoted to Mrs. Archbold, and he hated Alfred, who had openly defied him, and mortified his vanity about Frank Beverley.

One Saturday Alfred was ordered out to walk with Rooke and Hayes and Vulcan. He raised no objection: suspected, felt homicidal, suppressed the impulse, and by this self-command he got time to give that letter to Beverley with instructions.

But, all the walk, he was saying to himself that Julia was in the house, and he was kept away from her, and a rival with her; this made him sicken and rage by turns. He came back in a state verging on fury.

On entering the yard poor Beverley, who had done his bit of cunning, and by reaction now relapsed into extra simplicity, came running, and said, "I've done it; she has got it."

"What have you done? Who has got what?" cried Rooke.

"Don't tell, Frank."

"If you don't I'll shake your life out, ye young blackguard," cried Rooke, seizing him and throttling him till he was black in the face.

Alfred's long-pent fury broke out: he gnashed his teeth and dashed his fist in Rooke's face.

Rooke staggered back and bellowed with pain and anger, then rushing at him incautiously, received a stinger that staggered him, and nearly closed his right eye. He took the hint, and put himself in a posture that showed he was skilled in the art of self-defence. He stopped two blows neatly, and returned a heavy one upon the ribs. Alfred staggered back some steps, but steadied himself, and, as Rooke rushed in too hastily to improve his advantage, caught him heavily on the other eye, but lost his own balance a little, which enabled Rooke to

close; then came a sharp short rally of re-echoing blows, and Rooke, not to be denied, got hold of his man, and a wrestling bout ensued, in which, Alfred being somewhat weakened by misery and broken rest, Rooke's great weight and strength enabled him, after a severe struggle, to fall with his antagonist under him, and knock the breath out of his body for the moment. Then Hayes, who had stood prudently aloof, came in and helped handcuff him; they could not walk up and down him for the Robin, who stood by with a professional air to see fair play.

"Ah, cold iron is your best chance," he said satirically. "Never you mind, sir: you hit quick and well: I'd back *you* at long odds in the ring: both his peepers are in deep mourning." He added, "A cow can beat a man wrestling."

When Alfred was handcuffed they turned him loose. It soon transpired, however, that he was now a dangerous maniac (formula) and to be confined in the noisy ward.

On hearing this he saw the trap he had fallen into; saw and trembled: he asked himself what on earth he should do; and presently the saying came back to him, "And this is the highest stroke of art, to turn evil into good." He argued thus: "Wolf's love of money is my great evil: he will destroy me for money, do anything for money. Then suppose I offer him money to be honest." He begged an interview with Dr. Wolf on business. This was accorded at once. He asked the doctor plump whether he received a large sum to detain him under pretence of insanity.

"Not very, considering the trouble you sometimes give, Mr. Hardie," was the dry reply.

"Well, then, justice shall outbid rascality for once. I am a sane man, and you know it; a man of my word, and you know it. I'll give you a thousand pounds to let me out of this place."

Dr. Wolf's eyes sparkled.

"You shall have any bond or security you like; and the money within a week of my deliverance."

Dr. Wolf said he should be delighted to do it, if he could conscientiously.

At this piece of hypocrisy Alfred's cheek reddened, and he could not speak.

"Well, well, I do see a great change in you for the better," said Dr. Wolf. "If, as I suspect, you are convalescent, I will part with you without a thousand pounds or a thousand pence."

Alfred stared. Had he mistaken his man?

"I'll tell you what, though," said the smooth doctor. "I have got two pictures, one by Raphael, one by Correggio."

"I know them," said the quick-witted Alfred; "they are worth more than a thousand pounds."

"Of course they are, but I would take a thousand pounds from *you*."

"Throw me in my liberty, and I'll make it guineas."

"We will see about that." And with this understanding the men of business parted. Dr. Wolf consulted Mrs. Archbold then and there.

"Impossible," said she; "the law would dissolve such a bargain, and you would be exposed and ruined."

"But a thousand pounds!" said the poor doctor.

"Oh, he offered me more than that," said Mrs. Archbold.

"You don't mean to say so; when was that?"

"Do you remember one Sunday that I walked him out, to keep clear of Mrs. Dodd? Have you not observed that I have not repeated the experiment?"

"Yes. But I really don't know why."

"Will you promise me faithfully not to take any notice if I tell you?"

The doctor promised.

Then she owned to him with manifest reluctance that Alfred had taken advantage of her kindness, her indiscretion, in walking alone with him, and made passionate love to her. "He offered me, not a thousand pounds," said she, "but his whole fortune, and his heart, if I would fly with him from *these odious walls;* that was his expression."

Then seeing out of a corner of her eye that the doctor was turning almost green with jealousy, this artist proceeded to describe the love scene between her and Alfred, with feigned hesitation, yet minute detail; only she inverted the parts; Alfred in her glowing page made the hot love; she listened abashed, confused, and tried all she could think of to bring him to better sentiments. She concluded this chapter of history inverted with a sigh, and said, "So now he hates me, I believe, poor fellow."

"Do you regret your refusal?" asked Dr. Wolf, uneasily.

"Oh, no, my dear friend. Of course my judgment says that few women at my age and in my position would have refused. But we poor women seldom go by our judgments." And she cast a tender look down at the doctor's feet.

In short, she worked on him so, that he left Alfred at her disposition, and was no sooner gone to his other asylum six miles off, than the calumniated was conducted by Hayes and Rooke through passage after passage, and door after door, to a wing of the building connected with the main part only by a covered way. As they neared it, strange noises became audible. Faint at first, they got louder and louder. Singing, roaring, howling like wolves. Alfred's flesh began to creep. He stopped at the covered way: he would have fought to his last gasp

sooner than go further; but he was handcuffed. He appealed to the keepers: but he had used them both too roughly; they snarled and forced him on, and shut him into a common flagged cell, with a filthy truckle-bed in it, and all the vessels of gutta-percha. Here he was surrounded by the desperate order of maniacs he at present scarcely knew but by report. Throughout that awful night he could never close his eyes for the horrible, unearthly sounds that assailed him. Singing, swearing, howling like wild beasts! His right-hand neighbor reasoned high of faith and works, ending each pious argument with a sudden rhapsody of oaths, and never slept a wink. His left-hand neighbor alternately sang, and shouted, "Cain was a murderer, Cain was a murderer;" and howled like a wolf, making night hideous. His opposite neighbor had an audience, and every now and then delivered in a high nasal key, "Let us curse and pray;" varying it sometimes thus: "Brethren, let us work double tides." And then he would deliver a long fervent prayer, and follow it up immediately with a torrent of blasphemies so terrific that coming in such a contrast they made Alfred's body wet with perspiration to hear a poor creature so defy his Creator. No rest, no peace. When it was still, the place was like the grave; and ever and anon, loud, sharp, tremendous, burst a thunder-clap of curses, and set those poor demented creatures all yelling again for half an hour, making the tombs ring. And at clock-like intervals a harmless but dirty idiot, who was allowed to roam the ward, came and chanted through the keyhole, "Everything is nothing, and nothing is everything."

This was the only observation he had made for many years.

His ears assailed with horrors, of which you have literally no conception, or shadow of a conception, his nose

poisoned with ammoniacal vapors, and the peculiar wild-beast smell that marks the true maniac, Alfred ran wildly about his cell, trying to stop his ears, and trembling for his own reason. When the fearful night rolled away, and morning broke, and he could stand on his truckle-bed and see the sweet hoar-frost on a square yard of grass level with his prison-bars, it refreshed his very soul, and affected him almost to tears. He was then, to his surprise, taken out, and allowed to have a warm bath, and to breakfast with David and the rest; but I suspect it was done to watch the effect of the trial he had been submitted to. After breakfast, having now no place to go, he lay on a bench, and there exhausted nature overpowered him, and he fell fast asleep.

Mrs. Archbold came by on purpose and saw him. He looked very pale and peaceful. There was a cut on his forehead due to Rooke's knuckles. Mrs. Archbold looked down, and the young figure and haughty face seemed so unresisting and peaceful-sad, she half relented, and shed some bitter tears. That did not, however, prevent her setting her female spies to watch him more closely than ever.

He awoke cold but refreshed, and found little Beverley standing by him with wet eyes. Alfred smiled, and held out his hand like a captive monarch to his faithful vassal. "They sha'n't put you in the noisy ward again," sobbed Frank. "This is your last night here."

"Hy, Frank, you rascal, my boots!" roared Rooke from an open window.

"Coming, sir, coming!"

Alfred's next visitor was the Robin. He came whispering, "It is all right with Garrett, sir, and he has got a key of the back gate; but you must get back to your old room, or we can't work."

"Would to Heaven I could, Robin; another night or two in the noisy ward will drive me mad, I think."

"Well, sir, I'll tell you what you do, which we all have to do it at odd times: hold a candle to the devil: here she comes: I think she is everywhere all at one time." The Robin then sauntered away, affecting nonchalance, and Alfred proceeded to hold the candle as directed. "Mrs. Archbold," said he, timidly, rising from his seat at her approach.

"Sir," said she, haughtily, and affecting surprise.

"I have a favor to ask you, madam. Would you be so kind as to let me go back to my room?"

"What, you have found I am not so powerless as you thought!"

"I find myself so weak, and you so powerful, that — you can afford to be generous."

"I have no more power over you than you have over me."

"I wish it was so."

"I'll prove it," said she. "Who has got the key of your room? Hayes?" She whistled and sent for him, and gave him the requisite order before Alfred. Alfred thanked her warmly.

She smiled, and went away disposed to change her tactics, and, having shown him how she could torment, try soothing means, and open his heart by gratitude.

But, presently, looking out of her window, she saw the Robin and him together; and somehow they seemed to her subtle, observant eyes, to be plotting. The very suspicion was fatal to that officer. His discharge was determined on. Meantime she set her spies to watch him, and tell her if they saw or heard anything.

Now Mrs. Archbold was going out to tea that evening, and, as soon as ever this transpired, the keepers secretly invited the keeperesses to a party in the first-class

patients' drawing-room. This was a rare opportunity, and the Robin and Garrett put their heads together accordingly.

In the dusk of the evening the Robin took an opportunity, and slipped a new key of the back gate into Alfred's hand, and told him "the trick was to be done that very night;" he was to get Thompson to go to bed early, and, instead of taking off his clothes, was to wait in readiness. "We have been plying Hayes already," said the Robin, "and, as soon as *she* is off, we shall hocus him and get the key; and, while they are all larking in the drawing-room, off you go to Merrimashee."

"Oh, you dear Robin! You have taken my breath away. But how about Vulcan?"

"Oh, we know how to make him amiable; a dog-fancier, a friend of mine, has provided the ondeniable where dogs is concerned: whereby Garrett draws the varmint into the scullery and shuts him in, while I get the key from the other. *It's* all right."

"Ah, Robin," said Alfred, "it sounds too good to be true. What? this my last day here!"

The minutes seemed to creep very slowly till eight o'clock came. Then he easily persuaded David to go to bed; Hayes went up and unlocked the door for them; it closed with a catch-lock. Hayes was drunk, but full of discipline, and insisted on the patients putting out their clothes; so Alfred made up a bundle from his portmanteau and threw it out. Hayes eyed it suspiciously, but was afraid to stoop and inspect it closer, for his drunken instinct told him he would pitch on his head that moment; so he retired grumbling, and dangling his key.

At the end of the corridor he met Mrs. Archbold full dressed, and with a candle in her hand. She held the candle up and inspected him; and a little conversation followed that sobered Mr. Hayes for a minute or two.

Mrs. Archbold was no sooner gone to her little tea-party than all the first-class ladies and gentlemen were sent to bed to get a good sleep for the good of their health, and the keepers and keeperesses took their place and romped, and made such a row, sleep was not easy within hearing of them. They sat on the piano, they sang songs to a drum accompaniment played on the table, they danced, drank, flirted, and enjoyed themselves like schoolboys. Hayes alone was gloomy and morose; so the Robin and Garrett consoled him, drank with him, and soothed him with the balm of insensibility; in which condition they removed him under charitable pretences, and searched his pockets in the passage for the key of Alfred's room.

To their infinite surprise and disappointment it was not upon him.

The fact is, Mrs. Archbold had snatched it from him in her wrath, and put it in her own pocket. How far her suspicions went, how much her spies had discovered, I really don't know; but somehow or other she was uneasy in her mind, and seeing Hayes in such a state, she would not trust him during her absence, but took the key away with her.

The Robin and Garrett knew nothing of this, and were all abroad; but they thought Rooke must have the key; so they proceeded to drink with him, and were just about to administer a really effective soporific in his grog, when they and all the merry party were suddenly startled by violent ringing at the bell, and thundering and hallooing at the hall-door. The men jumped to their feet and balanced themselves, and looked half wild, half stupid. The women sat and began to scream, for they had heard a word that has terrors for us all: peculiar terrors for them.

This alarm was due to a personage hitherto undervalued in the establishment.

Mr. Francis Beverley had been THINKING. So now, finding all the patients boxed up, and their attendants romping in the drawing-room, he lighted seven fires, skilfully on the whole, for practice makes perfect; but, singular oversight, he omitted one essential ingredient in the fire, and that was the grate.

To be plain, Mr. Francis made seven bonfires of bed-curtains, chairs, and other combustibles, in the servants' garrets, lighted them contemporaneously, and retired to the basement, convinced he had taken the surest means to deliver his friend out of Drayton House; and with a certain want of candor that characterizes the weak, proceeded to black his other bad master's shoes with singular assiduity.

There was no wind to blow the flame, but it was a clear frost; and soon fiery tongues shot out of three garret-windows into the night, and lurid gleams burnished four more, and the old house was burning merrily overhead, and ringing with hilarity on the first floor.

But the neighbors saw, pointed, wondered, comprehended, shouted, rang, knocked, and surged round the iron gate. "Fire! fire! fire!" and "Fire!" went down the road, and men on horseback galloped for engines; and the terror-stricken porter opened, and the people rushed in and hammered at the hall-doors; and when Rooke ran down and opened, "Fire!" was the word that met him from a score of eager throats and glittering eyes.

"Fire! Where?" he cried.

"Where! Why, *you* are on fire. Blazing!"

He ran out and looked up at the tongues of flame and volleys of smoke. "Shut the gate!" he roared. "Call the police! Fire! fire!" And he dashed back, and calling to the other keepers to unlock all the doors they

had keys of, ran up to the garrets to see what could be done. He came out awe-stricken at what he saw. He descended hastily to the third floor. Now the third floor of that wing was occupied principally by servants. In fact, the only patients at that time were Dodd and Alfred. Rooke called to the men below to send Hayes up to No. 75 with his key directly; he then ran down to the next floor, of which he had keys, and opened all the doors, and said to the inmates with a ghastly attempt at cheerfulness, belied by his shaking voice, "Get up, gentlemen, there is a ball and supper going on below." He was afraid to utter the word "fire" to them. The other keepers were as rapid, each on his beat, and soon the more rational patients took the alarm, and were persuaded or driven out half dressed into the yard, where they cowered together in extremity of fear, for the fire began to roar overhead like a lion, and lighted up the whole interior red and bright. All was screaming and confusion, and then came a struggle to get the incurable out from the basement story. There was no time to handcuff them. The keepers trusted to the terror of the scene to cow them, and so opened the doors and got them out anyhow. Wild, weird forms, with glaring eyes and matted hair, leaped out and ran into the hall, and laughed, and danced, and cursed in the lurid reflection of the fires above. Hell seemed discharging demons. Men recoiled from them, and well they did; for now the skylight exploded, and the pieces fell tinkling on the marble hall fast as hail. The crowd recoiled and ran, but those awful figures continued their gambols. One picked up the burning glass, and ground it in his hands that bled directly; but he felt neither burn nor cut. The keepers rushed in to withdraw them from so dangerous a place; all but one obeyed with sudden tameness; that one struggled and yelled like a demon.

In the midst of which fearful contest came a sudden thundering at a door on the third floor.

"What is that?" cried Rooke.

"It is Mr. Hardie," screamed the Robin. "You have left him locked in."

"I told Hayes to let him out long ago."

"But Hayes hasn't got the key. You've got it."

"No, no. I tell you Hayes has got it."

"No, no! Murder! murder! They are dead men. Run for Mrs. Archbold, somebody. Run! Here, hammers, hammers! for God's sake come and help me break the door! O Rooke, Rooke!"

"As I'm a man, Hayes has got the key!" cried Rooke, stamping on the ground, and white with terror.

By this time Garrett had got a hammer, and he and Wales rushed wildly up the stairs to batter in the strong door if they could. They got to the third floor, but with difficulty; the smoke began to blind them and choke them, and fiery showers fell on them, and drove them back smarting and choking. Garrett sank down gasping at the stair-foot. Wales ran into the yard uttering pitiful cries, and pointing wildly upwards; but before he got there, a hand had broken through the glass of a window up in the third floor, the poor white hand of a perishing prisoner, and clutched the framework and tore at it.

At this hand a thousand white faces were now upturned amid groans of pity and terror, such as only multitudes can utter. Suddenly those anxious faces and glistening eyes turned like one, for an attempt, wild and unintelligible, but still an attempt, was about to be made to save that hand and its owner out of the very jaws of death.

Now amongst the spectators was one whose life and reason were at stake on that attempt.

Mrs. Dodd was hurrying homeward from this very

neighborhood when the fire broke out. Her son Edward was coming at nine o'clock to tea, and, better still, to sleep. He was leaving the fire brigade. It had disappointed him; he found the fire-escape men saved the lives, the firemen only the property. He had gone into the business earnestly too; he had invented a thing like a treble pouch hook, which could be fastened in a moment to the end of a rope, and thrown into the window, and would cling to the bare wall, if there was nothing better, and enable him to go up and bring life down. But he had never got a chance to try it; and, *per contra*, he was on the engine when they went tearing over a woman and broke her arm and collar-bone in the Blackfriars Road; and also when they went tearing over their own fire-dog, and crippled him. All this seemed out of character, and shocked Edward; and then his mother could not get over the jacket.

In a quarter of an hour he was to take off the obnoxious jacket forever, and was now lounging at the station, smoking a short pipe, when a man galloped up crying, "Fire!"

"All right!" said Edward, giving a whiff. "Where?"

"Lunatic Asylum. Drayton House."

Guess how long before the horses were to, and the engine tearing at a gallop down the road, and the firemen shouting "Fire! fire!" to clear the way, and Edward's voice the loudest.

When the report of fire swept townward past Mrs. Dodd, she turned, and saw the glow.

"Oh, dear," said she, "that must be somewhere near Drayton House." And full of the tender fears that fill such bosoms as hers for those they love, she could not go home till she had ascertained that it was not Drayton House. Moreover, Edward's was the nearest station; she had little hope now of seeing him to tea. She

sighed, and retraced her steps, and made timid inquiries, but could gain no clear information. Presently she heard galloping behind her, and the firemen's wild, sharp cry of fire. An engine drawn by two powerful brown horses came furiously, all on fire itself with red paint and polished steel gleaming in the lights; helmeted men clustered on it, and out of one of these helmets looked a face like a fighting lion's, the eyes so dilated, the countenance in such towering excitement, the figure half rising from his seat as though galloping was too slow and he wanted to fly. It was Edward; mother and son caught sight of one another as the engine thundered by, and he gave her a solemn ardent look and pointed towards the fire; by that burning look and eloquent gesture she knew it was something more than a common fire. She trembled, and could not move. But this temporary weakness was followed by an influx of wild vigor; she forgot her forty-two years, and flew to hover round the fire as the hen round water. Unfortunately she was too late to get any nearer than the road outside the gates, the crowd was so dense. And, while her pale face and anxious eyes, the eyes of a wife and a mother, were bent on that awful fire, the human tide flowed swiftly up behind her, and there she was wedged in. She was allowed her foot of ground to stand and look like the rest — no more. Mere unit in that mass of panting humanity, hers was one of the thousands of upturned faces lurid in the light of the now blazing roof. She saw with thousands the hand break the window and clutch the frame; she gasped with the crowd at that terrible and piteous sight, and her bosom panted for her fellow-creature in sore peril. But what is this? The mob inside utter a great roar of hope; the crowd outside strain every eye.

A gleaming helmet overtops the outer wall. It is a

fireman mounting the great elm-tree in the madhouse yard. The crowd inside burst in a cheer. He had a rope round his loins; his face was to the tree. He mounted and mounted like a cat; higher and higher and higher, till he reached a branch about twelve feet above the window and as many distant from it laterally; the crowd cheered him lustily. But Mrs. Dodd, half distracted with terror, implored them not to encourage him. "It is my child!" she cried, despairingly; "my poor reckless darling! Come down, Edward; for your poor mother's sake, come down."

"Dear heart," said a woman, "it is the lady's son. Poor thing!"

"Stand on my knee, ma'am," said a coal-heaver.

"Oh, no, sir, no. I could not look at him for the world. I can only pray for him. Good people, pray for us!" And she covered her face, and prayed and trembled and sobbed hysterically. A few yards behind was another woman, who had arrived later, yet, like her, was wedged immovable. This woman was more terror-stricken than Mrs. Dodd; and well she might; for *she* knew who was behind that fatal window; the woman's name was Edith Archbold. The flames were now leaping through the roof, and surging up towards heaven in waves of fire six feet high. Edward, scorched and half blinded, managed to fasten his rope to the bough, and, calculating the distances vertical and lateral he had to deal with, took up rope accordingly, and launched himself into the air.

The crowd drew their breath so hard, it sounded like a murmur. To their horror he missed the window, and went swinging back.

There was a cry of dismay. But Edward had never hoped to leap into the window; he went swinging by the rope back to the main stem of the tree, gave it a fierce

spang with his feet, and by this means and a powerful gesture of his herculean loins, got an inch nearer the window; back again, and then the same game; and so he went swinging to and fro over a wider and wider space; and, by letting out an inch of cord each swing, his flying feet came above the window-ledge, then a little higher, then higher still, and now, O sight strange and glorious — as this helmeted hero, with lips clenched and great eyes that stared unflinchingly at the surging flames, and gleamed supernaturally with inward and outward fire, swung to and fro on his frail support, still making for the window — the heads of all the hoping, fearing, admiring, panting crowd went surging and waving to and fro beneath; so did not their hearts only but their agitated bodies follow the course of his body, as it rushed to and fro faster and faster through the hot air starred with snowflakes and hail of fire. And those, his fellow-men, for whom the brave fireman made this supernatural effort, did they know their desperate condition? Were they still alive? One little hour ago Alfred sat on the bed, full of hope. Every minute he expected to hear the Robin put a key into the door. He was all ready, and his money in his pocket. Alas! his liberator came not; some screw loose again. Presently he was conscious of a great commotion in the house. Feet ran up and down. Then came a smell of burning. The elm-tree outside was illuminated. He was glad at first; he had a spite against the place. But soon he became alarmed, and hammered at the door and tried to force it. Impossible. "Fire!" rang from men's voices. Fire crackled above his head; he ran about the room like a wild creature; he sprang up at the window and dashed his hand through, but fell back. He sprang again, and got his hand on some of the lighter woodwork; he drew himself up nearly to the window, and then the wood

gave way, and he fell to the ground, and striking the back of his head, nearly stunned himself; the flames roared fearfully now; and at this, David, who had hitherto sat unconcerned, started up, and in a stentorian voice issued order upon order to furl every rag of sail, and bring the ship to the wind. He thought it was a tempest. "Oh, hush! hush!" cried Alfred in vain. A beam fell from the roof to the floor, precursor of the rest. On this David thought the ship was ashore, and shouted a fresh set of orders proper to the occasion, so terribly alike are the angry voices of the sister-elements. But Alfred implored him, and got him to kneel down with him, and held his hand and prayed.

And even while they kneeled, and Alfred prayed, death and life met and fought for them. Under the door, tight as it was, and through the keyhole, struggled a hot stifling smoke, merciful destroyer running before fire; and the shadow of a gigantic figure began to flicker in from the outside, and to come and go upon the wall. Alfred did not know what that was, but it gave him a vague hope; he prayed aloud as men pray only for their bodies. (The crowd heard him and hushed itself breathless.)

The smoke penetrated faster, blinding and stifling; the giant shadow came and went. But now the greater part of the roof fell in with an awful report; the blazing timbers thundered down to the basement with endless clatter of red-hot tiles; the walls quivered, and the building belched skyward a thousand jets of fire, like a bouquet of rockets, and then a cloud of smoke. Alfred gave up all hope, and prepared to die. Crash! as if discharged from a cannon, came bursting through the window, with the roar of an applauding multitude and a mother's unheeded scream, a helmeted figure, rope in hand, and alighted erect and commanding on the floor

amidst a shower of splinters and tinking glass. "Up, men, for your lives," roared this fire-warrior, clutching them hard, and dragged them both up to their feet by one prodigious gesture; all three faces came together and shone in the lurid light; and he knew his father and "the wretch," and "the wretch" knew him. "Oh!"—"Ah!" passed like pistol-shots, but not a word; even this strange meeting went for little, so awful was the moment, so great are death and fire. Edward clawed his rope to the bed; up to the window by it, dropped his line to fireman Jackson planted express below, and in another moment was hauling up a rope-ladder; this he attached, and getting on it and holding his own rope by way of banister, cried, "Now, men, quick, for your lives." But poor David called that deserting the ship, and demurred, till Alfred assured him the captain had ordered it. He then submitted directly, touched his forelock to Edward, whom he took for that officer, and went down the ladder; Alfred followed.

Now the moment those two figures emerged from the burning pile, Mrs. Dodd, already half dead with terror for her son, saw and knew her husband; for all about him it was light as day.

What terror! what joy! what gratitude! what pride! what a tempest of emotions!

But her fears were not ended; Edward, not to overweight the ladder, went dangling by his hands along the rope towards the tree. And his mother's eyes stared fearfully from him to the other, and her heart hung trembling on her husband descending cautiously, and then on his preserver, her son, who was dangling along by the hands on that frail support. The mob cheered him royally, but she screamed and hid her face again. At last both her darlings were safe, and then the lusty cheers made her thrill with pride and joy, till all of a

sudden they seemed to die away, and the terrible fire go out; and the sore-tried wife and mother drooped her head and swooned away, wedged in and kept from falling by the crowd.

Inside, the mob parted and made two rushes, one at the rescued men, one at the gallant fireman. Alfred and David were overpowered with curiosity and sympathy. They had to shake a hundred honest hands, and others still pressing on, hurried them nearly off their feet.

"Gently, good friends; don't part us," said Alfred.

"He is the keeper," said one of the crowd.

"Yes, I'm his keeper; and I want to get him quietly away. This excitement will do him harm else; good friends, help me out by that door."

"All right," was the cry, and they rushed with him to the back door. Rooke, who was about twenty yards off, saw and suspected this movement. He fought his way and struggled after Alfred in silence. Presently, to his surprise, Alfred unlocked the door and whipped out with David, leaving the door open. Rooke shouted and hallooed: "Stop him! he is escaping," and struggled madly to the door; now another crowd had been waiting in the meadows; seeing the door open they rushed in, and the doorway was jammed directly. In the confusion Alfred drew David along the side of the wall; told him to stay quiet, bolted behind an out-house, and then ran across country for the bare life.

To his horror David followed him, and with a madman's agility soon caught him.

He snorted like a spirited horse, and shouted cheerily, "Go ahead, messmate; I smell blue water."

"Come on then," cried Alfred, half mad himself with excitement, and the pair ran furiously, and dashed through hedges and ditches, torn, bleeding, splashed, triumphant; behind them the burning madhouse, above

them the spangled sky, the fresh, free air of liberty blowing in their nostrils, and rushing past their ears.

Alfred's chest expanded, he laughed for joy, he sang for joy, he leaped as he went: nor did he care where he went. David took the command, and kept snuffing the air, and shaping his course for blue water. And so they rushed along the livelong night.

Free.

CHAPTER XII.

A REPORT came round that the asylum was open in the rear. A rush was made thither from the front: and this thinned the crowd considerably; so then Mrs. Dodd was got out by the help of some humane persons, and carried into the nearest house, more dead than alive. There she found Mrs. Archbold in a pitiable state. That lady had been looking on the fire, with the key in her pocket, by taking which she was like to be a murderess: her terror and remorse were distracting, and the revulsion had thrown her into violent hysterics. Mrs. Dodd plucked up a little strength, and characteristically enough tottered to her assistance, and called for the best remedies, and then took her hand and pressed it, and whispered soothingly that both were now safe, meaning David and Edward. Mrs. Archbold thought she meant Alfred and David: this new shock was as good for her as cold water: she became quieter, and presently gulped out, "You saw them? you knew them (ump) all that way off?"

"Knew them?" said Mrs. Dodd; "why, one was my husband, and the other my son." Mrs. Archbold gave a sigh of relief. "Yes, madam," continued Mrs. Dodd, "the young fireman who went and saved my husband. was my own son, my Edward, my hero; oh, I am a happy wife, a proud mother;" she could say no more for tears of joy, and while she wept deliciously, Mrs. Archbold cried too, and so invigorated and refreshed her cunning, and presently she perked up and told Mrs. Dodd boldly that Edward had been seeking her, and was

gone home: she had better follow him, or he would be anxious. "But my poor husband!" objected Mrs. Dodd.

"He is safe," said the other; "I saw him (ump) with an attendant."

"Ah," said Mrs. Dodd, with meaning, "that other my son rescued was an attendant, was he?"

"Yes." (Ump.)

She then promised to take David under her special care, and Mrs. Dodd consented, though reluctantly, to go home.

To her surprise Edward had not yet arrived, and Julia was sitting up very anxious; and flew at her with a gurgle, and kissed her eagerly, and then, drawing back her head, searched the maternal eyes for what was the matter. "Ah, you may well look," said Mrs. Dodd. "O my child! what a night this has been;" and she sank into a chair, and held up her arms; Julia settled down in them directly, and in that position Mrs. Dodd told all the night's work, told it under a running accompaniment of sighs and kisses, and ejaculations, and "dear mammas," and "poor mammas," and bursts of sympathy, astonishment, pity, and wonder. Thus embellished and interrupted, the strange tale was hardly ended, when a manly step came up the stairs, and both ladies pinched each other, and were still as mice, and in walked a fireman with a wet livery, and a face smirched with smoke. Julia flew at him with a gurgle of the first degree, and threw her arms round his neck, and kissed both his blackened cheeks again and again, crying, "Oh, my own, my precious, my sweet, brave darling, kiss me, kiss me, kiss me, you are a hero, a Christian hero, that saves life, not takes it" — Mrs. Dodd checked her impetuous career by asking piteously if his mother was not to have him. On this, Julia drew him along by the hand, and sank with him at Mrs. Dodd's knees, and she held him at

arm's length and gazed at him, and then drew him close and enfolded him, and thanked God for him; and then they both embraced him at once, and interwove him Heaven knows how, and poured the wealth of their womanly hearts out on him in a torrent and nearly made him snivel. But presently something in his face struck Mrs. Dodd, accustomed to read her children. "Is there anything the matter, love?" she inquired, anxiously. He looked down and said, "I am dead sleepy, mamma, for one thing."

"Of course he is, poor child," said Julia, doing the sub-maternal; "wait till I see everything is comfortable," and she flew off, turned suddenly at the door with, "Oh, you darling!" and up to his bedroom and put more coals on his fire, and took a swift housewifely look all round.

Mrs. Dodd seized the opportunity. "Edward, there is something amiss."

"And no mistake," said he, dryly. "But I thought if I told you before her, you might scold me."

"Scold you, love? Never. Hush! I'll come to your room by and by."

Soon after this they all bade each other good-night; and presently Mrs. Dodd came and tapped softly at her son's door, and found him with his vest and coat off, and his helmet standing on the table reflecting a red coal; he was seated by the fire in a brown study, smoking. He apologized, and offered to throw the weed away. "No, no," said she, suppressing a cough, "not if it does you good."

"Well, mother, when you are in a fix, smoke is a soother, you know, and I'm in a regular fix."

"A fix," sighed Mrs. Dodd, resignedly: and waited patiently, all ears.

"Mamma," said the fire-warrior, becoming speculative under the dreamy influence of the weed, "I wonder

whether such a muddle ever was before. When a man is fighting with fire, what with the heat and what with the excitement, his pulse is at a hundred and sixty, and his brain all in a whirl, and he scarce knows what he is doing till after it is done. But I've been thinking of it all since. (Puff.) There was my poor little mamma in the mob; I double myself up for my spring, and I go at the window, and through it; now on this side of it I hear my mother cry, 'Edward! come down;' on the other side I fall on two men perishing in an oven; one is my own father, and the other is, who do you think? 'The wretch.'"

Mrs. Dodd held up her hands in mute amazement.

"I had promised to break every bone in his skin at our first meeting; and I kept my promise by saving his skin and bones, and life and all." (Puff.)

Mrs. Dodd groaned aloud. "I thought it was he," she said, faintly. "That tall figure, that haughty grace! But Mrs. Archbold told me positively it was an attendant."

"Then she told you a cracker. It was not an attendant, but a madman, and that madman was Alfred Hardie, upon my soul! Our Julia's missing bridegroom."

He smoked on in profound silence, waiting for her to speak. But she lay back in her chair mute and all relaxed, as if the news had knocked her down.

"Come now," said Edward at last; "what is to be done? May I tell Julia? that is the question."

"Not for the world," said Mrs. Dodd, shocked into energy. "Would you blight her young life forever, as mine is blighted?" She then assured him that, if Alfred's sad state came to Julia's ears, all her love for him would revive, and she would break with Mr. Hurd, and indeed never marry all her life. "I see no end to her misery," continued Mrs. Dodd, with a deep sigh;

"for she is full of courage; she would not shrink from a madhouse (why, she visits lazar-houses every day); she would be always going to see her Alfred, and so nurse her pity and her unhappy love. No, no; let *me* be a widow with a living husband, if it is God's will; I have had my happy days. But my child she shall not be so withered in the flower of her days for any man that ever breathed; she shall not, I say." The mother could utter no more for emotion.

"Well," said Edward, "you know best. I generally make a mess of it when I disobey you. But concealments are bad things too. We used to go with our bosoms open. Ah!" (Puff.)

"Edward," said Mrs. Dodd, after some consideration, "the best thing is to marry her to Mr. Hurd at once. He has spoken to me for her, and I sounded her."

"Has he? Well, and what did she say?"

"She said she would rather not marry at all, but live and die with me. Then I pressed her a little, you know. Then she did say she could never marry any but a clergyman, now she had lost her poor Alfred. And then I told her I thought Mr. Hurd could make her happy, and she would make me happy, if she could esteem him; and marry him."

"Well, mamma, and what then?"

"Why, then my poor child gave me a look that haunts me still — a look of unutterable love, and reproach, and resignation, and despair, and burst out crying so piteously I could say no more. Oh! oh! oh! oh!"

"Don't you cry, mammy dear," said Edward. "Ah, I remember when a tear was a wonder in our house." And the fire-warrior sucked at his cigar, to stop a sigh.

"And n—now n—ot a d—day without them," sighed Mrs. Dodd. "But *you* have cost me none, my precious boy."

"I'm waiting my time. (Puff.) Mamma, take my advice; don't you fidget so. Let things alone. Why hurry her into marrying Mr. Hurd or anybody? Look here; I'll keep dark to please you, if you'll keep quiet to please me."

At breakfast-time came a messenger with a line from Mrs. Archbold to say that David had escaped from Drayton House in company with another dangerous maniac.

Mrs. Dodd received the blow with a kind of desperate resignation. She rose quietly from the table without a word, and went to put on her bonnet, leaving her breakfast and the note; for she did not at once see all that was implied in the communication. She took Edward with her to Drayton House. The firemen had saved one half of that building; the rest was a black shell. Mrs. Archbold came to them, looking haggard, and told them two keepers were already scouring the country, and an advertisement sent to all the journals.

"O madam!" said Mrs. Dodd, "if the other should hurt him, or lead him somewhere to his death?"

Mrs. Archbold said she might dismiss this fear; the patient in question had but one illusion, and, though terribly dangerous when thwarted in that, was most intelligent in a general way, and much attached to Mr. Dodd; they were always together.

A strange expression shot into Mrs. Dodd's eye; she pinched Edward's arm to keep him quiet, and said with feigned indifference, —

"Then it was the one who was in such danger with my husband last night?"

"Yes," said Mrs. Archbold off her guard. It had not occurred to her that this handsome, fashionably dressed young gentleman was the fireman of last night. She saw her mistake, though, the moment he said bluntly, "Why, you told my mother it was an attendant."

"Did I, madam?" asked Mrs. Archbold, mighty innocently; "I suppose I thought so. Well, I was mistaken, unfortunately."

Mrs. Dodd was silent a moment, then, somewhat hastily, bade Mrs. Archbold good-by. She told the cabman to drive to an old acquaintance of ours, Mr. Green. He had set up detective on his own account. He was not at his office, but expected. She sat patiently down till he came in. They put their heads together, and Green dashed down to the asylum with a myrmidon, while Mrs. Dodd went into the city to obtain leave of absence from Cross and Co. This was politely declined at first, but on Mrs. Dodd showing symptoms of leaving them altogether, it was conceded. She returned home with Edward, and there was Mr. Green; he had actually traced the fugitives by broken fences, and occasional footsteps in the side-clay of ditches, so far as to leave no doubt they had got upon the great south-eastern road. Then Mrs. Dodd had a female inspiration. "The Dover road! ah! my husband will make for the sea."

"I shouldn't wonder, being a sailor," said Green; "it is a pleasure to work with a lady like you, that puts in a good hint. Know anything about the other one, ma'am?"

Mrs. Dodd almost started at this off-hand question. But it was a natural one for Green to ask.

She said gravely, "I do. To my cost."

Green's eyes sparkled, and he took out his note-book. "Now where is *he* like to make for?"

Mrs. Dodd seemed to wince at the question, and then turned her eyes inward to divine. The result was, she gave a downright shudder, and said evasively, "Being with David, I hope and pray he will go towards the coast."

"No, no," said Green, "it won't do to count on that

altogether. How do we know which of the two will lead the other? You must please to put Mr. Dodd out of the question, ma'am, for a moment. Now we'll say No. 2 had escaped alone; where would he be like to run to?"

Mrs. Dodd, thus pressed, turned her eyes more and more inward, and said at last in a very low voice, and with a sort of concentrated horror, —

"He will come to my house."

Mr. Green booked this eagerly. The lady's emotion was nothing to him; the hint was invaluable, the combination interesting. "Well, ma'am," said he, "I'll plant a good man in sight of your door; and I'll take the Dover road directly with my drag. My teeth weren't strong enough for the last nut you gave me to crack; let us try this one; Tom Green isn't often beat twice running."

"I will go with you, Mr. Green."

"Honored and proud, ma'am. But a lady like you in my dog-cart along o' me and my mate!"

Mrs. Dodd waived this objection almost contemptuously; she was all wife now.

It was agreed that Green should drive round for her in an hour. He departed for the present, and Edward proposed to go in the dog-cart too, but she told him no; she wanted him at home to guard his sister against "the wretch." Then seeing him look puzzled, "Consider, Edward," said she, "he is not like your poor father; he has not forgotten. That advertisement, 'Aileen Aroon,' it was from him, you know. And then why does he attach himself so to poor papa? Do you not see it is because he is Julia's father? 'The wretch' loves her still."

Edward from puzzled looked very grave. "What a head you have got, mamma!" he said. "I should never

have seen all this; yet it's plain enough now, as you put it."

"Yes, it is plain. Our darling is betrothed to a maniac; that maniac loves her, and much I fear she loves him. Some new calamity is impending. Oh, my son, I feel it already heavy on my heart. What is it to be? Is your father to be led to destruction, or will that furious wretch burst in upon your sister, and kill her, or perhaps kill Mr. Hurd, if he catches them together? What may not happen now? The very air seems to me swarming with calamities."

"Oh, I'll take care of all that," said Edward. And he comforted her a little by promising faithfully not to let Julia go out of his sight till her return.

She put on a plain travelling-dress. The dog-cart came. She slipped fifty sovereigns into Mr. Green's hands for expenses, and off they went at a slapping pace. The horse was a great bony hunter of rare speed and endurance, and his long stride and powerful action raised poor Mrs. Dodd's hopes, and the rushing air did her good. Green, to her surprise, made few inquiries for some miles on the Dover road; but he explained to her that the parties they were after had probably walked all night. "They don't tire, that sort," said Mr. Green.

At Dartford they got a doubtful intimation, on the strength of which he rattled on to Rochester. There he pulled up, deposited Mrs. Dodd at the principal inn till morning, and scoured the town for intelligence.

He inquired of all the policemen; described his men, and shrewdly added out of his intelligence, "Both splashed and dirty."

No, the bobbies had not seen them.

Then he walked out to the side of the town nearest London, and examined all the dealers in food. At last he found a baker who, early that morning, had sold a

quartern loaf to two tall men without hats, "and splashed fearful;" he added, "I thought they had broken prison; but 'twas no business of mine; they paid for the bread right enough."

On hearing they had entered Rochester hatless, the shrewd Mr. Green made direct to the very nearest slop-shop, and his sagacity was rewarded; the shopkeeper was a chatterbox, and told him yes, two gents out on a frolic had bought a couple of hats of him, and a whole set of sailor's clothes. "I think they were respectable, too; but nothing else would satisfy him. So the young one he humored him, and bought them. I took his old ones in exchange."

At that Green offered a sovereign for the old clothes blindfold. The trader instantly asked two pounds, and took thirty shillings.

Green now set the police to scour the town for a gentleman and a common sailor in company, offered a handsome reward, and went to bed in a small inn, with David's clothes by the kitchen fire. Early in the morning he went to Mrs. Dodd's hotel with David's clothes nicely dried, and told her his tale. She knew the clothes directly, kissed them, and cried over them; then gave him her hand with a world of dignity and grace: "What an able man! Sir, you inspire me with great confidence."

"And you me with zeal, ma'am," said the delighted Green. "Why, I'd go through fire and water for a lady like you that pays well, and doesn't grudge a fellow a bit of praise. Now you must eat a bit, ma'am, if it's ever so little, and then we'll take the road; for the police think the parties have left the town, and by their night's work they must be good travellers."

The dog-cart took the road, and the ex-hunter stepped out thirteen miles an hour.

Now at this moment Alfred and David were bowling along ahead with a perfect sense of security. All that first night, the grandest of his life, Alfred walked on air, and drank the glorious, exhilarating breath of freedom. But, when the sun dawned on them, his intoxicating joy began to be dashed with apprehension; hatless and bemired, might they not be suspected and detained by some officious authority?

But the slop-shop set that all right. He took a double-bedded room in "The Bear," locked the door, put the key under his pillow, and slept till eleven. At noon they were on the road again, and as they swung lustily along in the frosty but kindly air, Alfred's chest expanded, his spirits rose, and he felt a man all over. Exhilarated by freedom, youth, and motion, and a little inflated by reviving vanity, his heart, buoyant as his foot, now began to nurse aspiring projects: he would indict his own father, and the doctors, and immolate them on the altar of justice, and publicly wipe off the stigma they had cast on him, and meantime he would cure David and restore him to his family.

He loved this harmless companion of his cell, his danger, and his flight: loved him for Julia's sake, loved him for his own. Youth and vanity whispered, "I know more about madness than the doctors; I have seen it closer." It struck him, David's longing for blue water was one of those unerring instincts that sometimes guide the sick to their cure. And then as the law permits the forcible recapture of a patient — without a fresh order or certificates — within fourteen days of his escape from an asylum, he did not think it prudent to show himself in London till that time should have elapsed; so, all things considered, why not hide a few days with David in some insignificant seaport, and revel in liberty and blue water with him all day long, and so by associations

touch the spring of memory, and begin the cure? As for David, he seemed driven seaward by some unseen spur; he fidgeted at all delay; even dinner fretted him, he panted so for his natural element. Alfred humored him, and an hour after sunset they reached the town of Canterbury. Here Alfred took the same precautions as before, and slept till nine o'clock.

When he awoke, he found David walking to and fro impatiently. "All right, messmate," said Alfred, "we shall soon be in blue water." He made all haste, and they were on the road again by ten, walking at a gallant pace.

But the dog-cart was already rattling along about thirty miles behind them. Green inquired at all the turnpikes and vehicles; the scent was cold at first, but warmer by degrees, and hot at Canterbury. Green just baited his gallant horse, and came foaming on, and just as the pair entered the town of Folkestone, their pursuers came up to the cross-roads, not five miles behind them.

Alfred went to a good inn in Folkestone and ordered a steak, then strolled with David by the beach, and gloried in the water with him. "After dinner we will take a boat, and have a sail," said he. "See, there's a nice boat riding at anchor there."

David snuffed the breeze and his eye sparkled, and he said, "Wind due east, messmate." And this remark, slight as it was, was practical, and gave Alfred great delight; strengthened his growing conviction that not for nothing had this charge been thrown on him. He should be the one to cure his own father, for Julia's father was his; he had no other now. "All right," said he, gayly, "we'll soon be on blue water; but first we'll have our dinner, old boy, for I am starving." David said nothing, and went rather doggedly back to the inn with him.

The steak was on the table. Alfred told the waiter to uncover and David to fall to, while he just ran up-stairs to wash his hands. He came down in less than two minutes, but David was gone, and the waiter standing there erect and apathetic like a wooden sentinel.

"Why, where is he?" said Alfred.

"Gent's gone out," was the reply.

"And you stood there and let him, you born idiot? Which way is he gone?"

"I don't know," said the waiter, angrily. "I ain't a p'liceman. None but respectable gents come here, as don't want watching." Alfred darted out and scoured the town. He asked everybody if they had seen a tall gentleman dressed like a common sailor; nobody could tell him, there were so many sailors about the port; that which in an inland town would have betrayed the truant concealed him here. A cold perspiration began to gather on Alfred's brow, as he ran wildly all over the place.

He could not find him, nor any trace of him. At last it struck him that he had originally proposed to go to Dover, and had spoken of that town to David, though he had now glanced aside, making for the smaller ports on the south coast; he hired a horse directly, and galloped furiously to Dover. He rode down to the pier, gave his horse to a boy to hold, and ran about inquiring for David. He could not find him; but at last he found a policeman, who told him he thought there was another party on the same lay as himself. "No," said the man, correcting himself, "it was two they were after, a gentleman and a sailor. Perhaps you are his mate."

Alfred's blood ran cold. "Pursued! and so hotly! No, no," he stammered: "I suspect I am on the same business." Then he said cunningly (for asylums teach the frankest natures cunning), "Come and have a glass of grog, and tell me all about it." Bobby consented, and

under its influence described Mrs. Dodd and her companions to him.

But not everybody can describe minutely. In the bare outlines, which were all this artist could furnish him, Alfred recognized at once — whom do you think? Mrs. Archbold, Dr. Wolf, and his arch enemy Rooke, the keeper. Doubtless his own mind, seizing on so vague a description, adapted it rather hastily to what seemed probable. Mrs. Dodd never occurred to him, nor that David was the sole, or even the main, object of the pursuit. He was thoroughly puzzled what to do. However, as his pursuers had clearly scoured Dover, and would have found David if there, he made use of their labors and galloped back towards Folkestone. But he took the precaution to inquire at the first turnpike, and there he learned a lady and two men had passed through about an hour before in a dog-cart; it was a wonder he had missed them. Alfred gnashed his teeth. "Curse you!" he muttered. "Well, do my work in Folkestone, I'll find him yet, and baffle you." He turned his horse's head westward, and rode after David. Convinced that his lost friend would not go inland, he took care to keep near the cliffs, and had ever an eye on the beach when the road came near enough.

About eight miles west of Folkestone he saw a dog-cart going down a hill before him, but there was only a single person in it. However, he increased his pace and got close behind it as it mounted the succeeding hill, which was a high one. Walking leisurely behind it his quick eye caught sight of a lady's veil wrapped round the iron of the seat.

That made him instantly suspect this might be the dog-cart after all. But, if so, how came a stranger in it? He despised a single foe, and resolved to pump this one and learn where the others were.

While he was thinking how he should begin, the dog-cart stopped at the top of the hill, and the driver looked seaward at some object that appeared to interest him.

It was a glorious scene. Viewed from so great a height the sea expanded like ocean, and its light-blue waters sparkled and laughed innumerable in the breeze. "A beautiful sight, sir," said the escaped prisoner; "you may well stop to look at it." The man touched his hat and chuckled. "I don't think you know what I am looking at, sir," he said politely.

"I thought it was the lovely sea view; so bright, so broad, so *free*."

"No, sir; not but what I can enjoy that a bit too; but what I'm looking at is an 'unt. Do you see that little boat? Sailing right down the coast about eight miles off. Well, sir, what do you think there is in that boat? But you'll never guess. A madman."

"Ah!"

"Curious, sir, isn't it? a respectable gentleman too he is, and sails well, only stark staring mad. There was two of 'em in company, but it seems they can't keep together long. *Our* one steals a fisherman's boat, and there he goes down Channel. And now look here, sir; see this steam-tug smoking along right in front of us; she's after him, and see there's my governor aboard standing by the wheel with a bobby and a lady; and if ever there was a lady she's one;" here he lowered his voice. "She's that mad gentleman's wife, sir, as I am a living sinner."

They both looked down on the strange chase in silence. "Will they catch her?" asked Alfred at last, under his breath.

"How can we be off it, steam against sails? And if he runs ashore, I shall be there to nab him." Alfred looked and looked; the water came into his eyes. "It's

the best thing that can befall him now," he murmured. He gave the man half a crown, and then turned his horse's head and walked him down the hill towards Folkestone. On his arrival there he paid for his horse, and his untasted dinner, and took the first train to London, a little dispirited, and a good deal mortified, for he hated to be beat; but David was in good hands, that was one comfort; and he had glorious work on hand, — love and justice. He went to an out-of-the-way inn in the suburbs, and, when he had bought a carpet-bag and some linen and other necessaries, he had but one sovereign left.

His heart urged him vehemently to go at once and find his Julia; but alas! he did not even know where she lived, and he dared not at present make public inquiries; that would draw attention to himself, and be his destruction, for Wolf stood well with the police, and nearly always recaptured his truant patients by their aid before the fourteen days had elapsed. He determined to go first to a solicitor, and launch him against his enemies, while compelled to shirk them in his own person. Curious position! Now amongst his father's creditors was Mr. Compton, a solicitor, known for an eccentric but honorable man, and for success in litigation. Mr. Compton used to do his own business in Barkington, and employ an agent in London; but Alfred remembered to have heard just before his incarceration that he had reversed the parts, and now lived in London. Alfred found him out by the Directory, and called at his chambers in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He had to wait some time in the outer office listening to a fluent, earnest client preaching within; but presently a sharp voice broke in upon the drone, and after a few sentences Mr. Compton ushered out a client with these remarkable words: "And as for your invention, it has been invented

four times before you invented it, and never was worth inventing at all. And you have borrowed two hundred pounds of me in ninety loans, each of which cost me an hour's invaluable time. I hold ninety acknowledgments in your handwriting, and I'll put them all in force for my protection;" with this he turned to his head clerk: "Mr. Colls, take out a writ against this client. What is your Christian name, sir? I forget."

"Simon," said the gaping client, off his guard.

"Thank you, sir," said Mr. Compton with sudden politeness: then resuming hostilities, "a writ in the Common Pleas against Simon Macfarlane: keep it in your drawer, Colls, and if ever the said Macfarlane does me the honor to call on me again, serve him with it on the spot; and if not, not; good-morning, sir." And with this he bolted into his own room and slammed its door. The clerks opened the outer door to Mr. Macfarlane with significant grins, and he went out bewildered sorely, yea, even like one that walketh abroad in his sleep. "Now, sir," said Mr. Colls cheerfully to Alfred. But the new client naturally hesitated now; he put on his most fascinating smile, and said, "Well, Mr. Colls, what do you advise? Is this a moment to beard the lion in his den?"

At Alfred's smile and address Colls fell in love with him directly, and assured him *sotto voce*, and with friendly familiarity, that now was his time. "Why, he'll be as sweet as honey, now he has got rid of a *client*." With this he took Alfred's name, and ushered him into a room piled with japanned tin boxes, where Mr. Compton sat, looking all complacency at a large desk table, on which briefs, and drafts, and letters lay in profusion and seeming confusion. He rose, and with a benignant courtesy invited Alfred to sit down and explain his business.

The reader is aware our Oxonian could make a close and luminous statement. He began at the beginning, but soon disposed of preliminaries and came to his capture at Silverton. Then Mr. Compton quietly rang the bell, and with a slight apology to Alfred requested Colls to search for the draft of Mrs. Holloway's will. Alfred continued. Mr. Compton listened keenly, noted the salient points on a sheet of brief-paper, and demanded the exact dates of every important event related.

The story finished, the attorney turned to Colls, and said mighty coolly, "You may go. The will is in my pocket, but I made sure he was a madman. They generally are, these ill-used clients. (Exit Colls.) Got a copy of the settlement, sir, under which you take this ten thousand pounds?"

"No, sir."

"Any lawyer seen it?"

"Oh, yes; Mr. Crauford, down at Barkington."

"Good. Friend of mine. I'll write to him. Names and addresses of your trustees?"

Alfred gave them.

"You have brought the order on which you were confined, and the two certificates?"

"Not I," said Alfred. "I have begged and prayed for a sight of them, and never could get one. That is one of the galling iniquities of the system; I call it 'THE DOUBLE SHUFFLE.' Just bring your mind to bear on this, sir: The prisoner whose wits and liberty have been signed away behind his back is not allowed to see the order and certificate on which he is confined — until *after* his release: that release he is to obtain by combating the statements in the order and certificates. So to get out he must first see and contradict the lies that put him in; but to see the lies that put him in, he must first get out.

So runs the circle of iniquity. Now, is that the injustice of earth, or the injustice of hell?"

Mr. Compton asked a moment to consider: "Well, I think it is of the earth, earthy. There's a mixture of idiocy in it the Devil might fairly repudiate. Young gentleman, the English Statutes of Lunacy are famous monuments of legislatorial incapacity: and indeed, as a general rule, if you want justice and wisdom, don't you go to Acts of Parliament, but to the Common Law of England."

Alfred did not appreciate this observation: he made no reply to it, but inquired, with some heat, "what he could do to punish the whole gang; his father, the certifying doctors, and the madhouse keepers?"

"Humph! You might indict them all for a conspiracy," said Mr. Compton; "but you would be defeated. As a rule, avoid criminal proceedings where you have a civil remedy. A jury will give a verdict and damages where they would not convict on the same evidence. Yours is just one of those cases where Temper says, 'Indict!' but Prudence says, 'Sue!' and Law, through John Compton, its oracle in this square, says, 'Sue the defendant and no other.' Now, who is the true defendant here, or party liable in law?"

"The keeper of the asylum, for one."

"No. If I remember right, all proceedings against him are expressly barred by a provision in the last statute. Let us see."

He took down the statutes of the realm, and showed Alfred the clause which raises the proprietor of a madhouse above the civic level of a Prince Royal. "Curse the law!" said Alfred, bitterly.

"No, don't curse the law. Curse the act if you like; but we can't get on without the law, neither of us. Try again."

"The certifying doctor, sir?"

"Humph!" said Mr. Compton, knitting his brows: "a jury might give you a verdict. But it would probably be set aside by the full court, or else by a court of error. For, unless you could prove informality, barefaced negligence, or *mala fides*, what does it come to? A professional man, bound to give medical opinions to all comers, is consulted about you, and says he thinks you are insane: you turn out sane. Well, then he was mistaken: but not more than he is in most of his professional opinions. We lawyers know what guesswork medicine is: we see it in the witness-box. I hate suing opinions: it is like firing bullets at snipes in a wind. Try again."

Alfred groaned. "Why, there is nobody left but the rogue who signed the order."

"And if you were a lawyer, that alone would tell you he is the defendant. Where a legal wrong has been committed by A, B, and C, and there is no remedy against A or B, there must either be one against C, or none at all: but this law abhors as nature does a vacuum. Besides, this defendant has *done* the wrong complained of. In his person you sue an act, not an opinion. But of course you are not cool enough to see all this just at first."

"Cool, sir," said Alfred, despairingly: "I am frozen with your remorseless law. What, of all these villains, may I only attack one, and can't I imprison even him, as he has me? Such narrow law encourages men to violence, who burn under wrongs like mine."

Mr. Compton looked keenly at his agitated, mortified client, but made no concession. He gave him a minute to digest the law's first bitter pill: and then said, "If I am to act for you, you had better write a line to the Commissioners of Lunacy requesting them to hand me copies of the order and certificates." Alfred wrote it.

"And now," said Mr. Compton, thoughtfully, "I don't think they will venture to recapture you during the fourteen days. But still they might: and we attorneys are wary animals. So please give me at once a full authority to act under advice of counsel for your protection."

Alfred wrote as requested, and Mr. Compton put the paper in his drawer, remarking, "With this I can proceed by law or equity, even should you get into the asylum again." He then dismissed Alfred somewhat abruptly, but with an invitation to call again after three clear days. Like most ardent suitors after their first interview with passionless law, he went away sadly chilled, and so home to his cheerless lodging, to count the hours till he could see Julia, and learn his fate from her lips.

This very morning a hasty note came to Edward from Folkestone, worded thus:—

O Edward: my worst misgivings! The two have parted. Poor papa has taken a man's boat and is in sight. We shall follow directly in a steamboat. But the other! You know my fears; you must be father and mother to that poor child till I come home.

Your sad mother,

LUCY DODD.

Julia held out her hand for the note. Edward put it in his pocket.

"What is that for?" said the young lady.

"Why, surely I may put my own property in my pocket."

"Oh, certainly! I only want to look at it first."

"Excuse me."

"Are you in earnest, Edward? Not let me see dear mamma's letter!" and the vivid face looked piteously surprised.

"Oh, I'll tell you the contents. Papa had got to Folkestone and taken a boat, and gone to sea: then

mamma took a steamboat and after him: so she will soon catch him, and is not that a comfort?"

"Oh, yes," cried Julia, and was for some time too interested and excited to think of anything else. But presently she returned to the charge. "Anything else, dear?"

"Humph? Well, not of equal importance."

"Oh, if it is of no importance, there can be no reason for not telling me. What was it?"

Edward colored, but said nothing. He thought, however: and thus ran his thoughts: "She's my intellectual superior; and I've got to deceive her; and a nice mess I shall make of it."

"It *is* of importance," said Julia, eying him. "You have told a story: and you don't love your sister." This fulminated, she drew herself up proudly and was silent. A minute afterwards, stealing a look at her, he saw her eyes suddenly fill with tears, *apropos* of nothing tangible.

"Now this is nice," said he to himself.

At noon she put on her bonnet to visit her district. He put on his hat directly, and accompanied her. Great was her innocent pleasure at that: it was the first time he had done her the honor. She took him to her poor people, and showed him off with innocent pride.

"Hannah, this is my brother." Then in a whisper, "Isn't he beautiful?" Presently she saw him looking pale; unheard-of phenomenon. "There now, you are ill," said she. "Come home directly, and be nursed."

"No, no," said he. "I only want a little fresh air. What horrid places! what horrid sights and smells! I say, you must have no end of pluck to face them."

"No, no, no! Dearest, I pray for strength: that is how I manage. And, O Edward, you used to think the poor were not to be pitied. But now you see."

"Yes, I see, and smell and all. You are a brave, good girl. Got any salts about you?"

"Yes, of course. There. But fancy a young lion smelling salts."

"A young duffer, you mean; that has passed for game through the thing not being looked into close."

"Oh, you can be close enough, where I want you to be open."

No answer.

The next day he accompanied her again, but remained at the stair-foot while she went in to her patients; and, when she came down, asked her, could no good Christian be found to knock that poor woman on the head who lived in a plate.

"No good heathen, you mean," said Julia.

"Why, yes," said he; "the savages manage these things better."

He also accompanied her shopping, and smoked phlegmatically outside the shops; nor could she exhaust his patience. Then the quick girl put this and that together. When they were at home again and her bonnet off, she looked him in the face and said sweetly, "I have got a watch-dog." He smiled, and said nothing. "Why don't you answer?" cried Julia, impetuously.

"Because least said is soonest mended. Besides, I'm down upon you: you decoy me into a friendly conversation, and then you say biting things directly."

"If I bite you, you sting me. Such want of confidence! Oh, how cruel! how cruel! Why can you not trust me? Am I a child? No one is young, who has suffered what I have suffered. Secrets disunite a family! and we were so united. And then you are so stupid: *you* keep a secret? Yes, like a dog in a chain; you can't hide it one bit. You have undertaken a task you are not fit for, sir; to hide a secret you must be able to

tell fibs: and you can't: not for want of badness, but cleverness to tell them smoothly; you know it, you know it; and so out of your abominable slyness you won't say a word. There, it is no use my trying to provoke him. I wish you were not so good-tempered; so apathetic I mean, of course." Then, with one of her old rapid transitions, she began to caress him and fawn on him: she seated him in an arm-chair and herself on a footstool, and suddenly curling round his neck, murmured, "Dear, dear brother, have pity on a poor girl, and tell her is there any news that I have a right to hear, only mamma has given you your orders not to tell me; tell me, love!" This last in an exquisite whisper.

"Let me alone, you little fascinating demon," said he, angrily. "Ask mamma. I won't tell you a word."

"Thank you!" she cried, bounding to her feet; "you *have* told me. He is alive. He loves me still. He was bewitched, seduced, deluded. He has come to himself. Mamma has seen him. He wants to come and beg my pardon. But you are all afraid I shall forgive him. But I will not, for at the first word I'll stop his mouth, and say, 'If you were happy away from me, I suppose you would not have come back.'" And instantly she burst out singing, with inspired eloquence and defiance, —

"Castles are sacked in war,
Chieftains are scattered far,
Truth is a fixed star —
Aileen aroon."

But unable to sustain it, the poor impetuosity drooped as quickly as she mounted, and out went her arm on the table and her forehead sank on her arm, and the tears began to run silently down the sweet face, so brave for a moment.

"W—will y—you allow me to light a cigar?" said

Edward. "I'm wretched and miserable; you tempest in petticoats, you!"

She made him a sign of assent with the hand that was dangling languidly, but she did not speak; nor did she appeal to him any more. Alienation was commencing. But what was worse than speaking her mind, she was forever at the window now, looking up and down the street; and walking with her he felt her arm often tremble, and sometimes jerk. The secret was agitating her nerves, and destroying her tranquillity as much, or perhaps more, than if she had known all.

Mrs. Dodd wrote from Portsmouth: whereof anon.

Mr. Peterson called, and soon after him Mr. Hurd. Edward was glad to see them, especially the latter, whose visits seemed always to do Julia good.

Moreover, as Peterson and Hurd were rivals, it afforded Edward an innocent amusement to see their ill-concealed aversion to one another, and the admirable address and delicacy with which his sister conducted herself between them.

However, this pastime was cut short by Sarah coming in and saying, "There's a young man wants to see you, sir."

Julia looked up and changed color.

"I think he is a fireman," said Sarah. She knew very well he was a fireman, and also one of her followers. Edward went out and found one of his late brethren, who told him a young gentleman had just been inquiring for him at the station.

"What was he like?"

"Why, I was a good ways off, but I saw he was a tall one."

"Six feet?"

"Full that."

"Give you his name?"

"No: I didn't speak to him: it was Andrew. Andrew says he asked if there was a fireman called Dodd: so Andrew said you had left; then the swell asked where you lived, and Andrew couldn't tell him any more than it was in Pembroke Street. So I told him, says I, 'Why couldn't you call me? It is number sixty-six,' says I. 'Oh, he is coming back,' says Andrew. However, I thought I'd come and tell you." (And so get a word with Sarah, you sly dog.)

Edward thanked him, and put on his hat directly, for he could not disguise from himself that this visitor might be Alfred Hardie. Indeed, what more likely?

Messrs. Hurd and Peterson always tried to stay one another out whenever they met at 66 Pembroke Street. However, to make sure of not leaving Julia alone, Edward went in and asked them both to luncheon, at which time he said he should be back.

As he walked rapidly to the station he grew more and more convinced that it was Alfred Hardie. And his reflections ran like this: "What a headpiece mamma has! But it did not strike her he would come to me first. Yet how plain that looks now: for of course I'm the duffer's only clew to Julia. These madman are no fools though. And how quiet he was that night! And he made papa go down the ladder first: that was the old Alfred Hardie; he was always generous: vain, overbearing, saucy, but noble with it all. I liked him: he was a man that showed you his worst, and let you find his best out by degrees. He hated to be beat: but that's no crime. He was a beautiful oar, and handled his mawleys uncommon; he sparred with all the prize-fighters that came to Oxford, and took punishment better than you would think; and a wonderful quick hitter; Alec Reed owned that. Poor Taff Hardie! And when I think that God has overthrown his powerful mind, and

left me mine, such as it is! But the worst is my having gone on calling him 'the wretch' all this time: and nothing too bad for him. I ought to be ashamed of myself. It grieves me very much. 'When found make a note on;' never judge a fellow behind his back again."

Arrived at the station, he inquired whether his friend had called again, and was answered in the negative. He waited a few minutes, and then, with the superintendent's permission, wrote a note to Alfred, inviting him to dine at Simpson's at six, and left it with the firemen. This done, he was about to return home, when another thought struck him. He got a messenger, and sent off a single line to Dr. Wolf, to tell him Alfred Hardie would be at Simpson's at seven o'clock.

But, when the messenger was gone, he regretted what he had done. He had done it for Alfred's good; but still it was treason. He felt unhappy, and wended his way homeward disconsolately, realizing more and more that he had not brains for the difficulties imposed upon him.

On entering Pembroke Street he heard a buzz. He looked up, and saw a considerable crowd collected in a semicircle. "Why, that is near our house," he said, and quickened his steps.

When he got near he saw that all the people's eyes were bent on No. 66.

He dashed into the crowd. "What on earth is the matter?" he cried.

"The matter? Plenty's the matter, young man," cried one.

"Murder's the matter," said another.

At that he turned pale as death. An intelligent man saw his violent agitation, and asked him hurriedly if he belonged to the house.

"Yes. For mercy's sake what is it?"

"Make way there!" shouted the man. "He belongs. Sir, a madman has broke loose and got into your house. And I'm sorry to say he has just killed two men."

"With a pistol," cried several voices, speaking together.

CHAPTER XIII.

Alfred Hardie spent three days writhing in his little lodging. His situation had been sadder, but never more irritating. By right possessor of thousands, yet in fact reduced to one suit, two shirts, and half a crown: rich in intellect, yet hunted as a madman: affianced to the loveliest girl in England, yet afraid to go near her for fear of being torn from her again and forever. All this could last but one week more; but a week's positive torture was no trifle to contemplate, with a rival at his Julia's ear all the time. Suppose she should have been faithful all these months, but in this last week should be worn out and give herself to another: such things had been known. He went to Lincoln's Inn with this irritating fear tearing him like a vulture. Mr. Compton received him cheerfully, and told him he had begun operations in Hardie *versus* Hardie: had written to Thomas Hardie two days ago, and inquired his London solicitor, and whether that gentleman would accept service of the writ in Hardie *versus* Hardie.

"To Thomas Hardie? Why, what has he to do with it?" asked Alfred.

"He is the defendant in the suit." Then seeing amazement and incredulity on Alfred's face, he explained that the Commissioners of Lunacy had treated him with great courtesy; had at once furnished him with copies, not only of the order and certificates, but of other valuable documents. "And there," said he, "lies the order; signed by Thomas Hardie, of Clare Court, Yorkshire."

"Curse his impudence!" cried Alfred in a fury: "why, sir, he is next door to an idiot himself."

"What does that matter? Ah, now, if I had gone in a passion and indicted him, there would be a defence directly; 'no malice, defendant being *non compos.*' Whereas, by gently, quietly suing him, even if he was a lunatic, we would make him or his estate pay a round sum for falsely imprisoning a sane Briton. By-the-by, here is counsel's opinion on your case," and he handed him a short opinion of a distinguished Queen's Counsel, the concluding words of which were these: —

3. If the certificates and order are in legal form, and were made and given *bonâ fide*, no action lies for the capture or detention of Mr. Hardie.

"Why, it is dead against me," said Alfred. "There goes the one rotten reed you had left me."

"Singularly dead," said the attorney, coolly. "He does not even say 'I am of opinion.' He is in great practice, and hard worked; in his hurry he has taken up the Lunacy Acts, and has forgotten that the rights of sane Englishmen are not the creatures of these little trumpery statutes; no, thank you; our rights are centuries older, and prevail wherever, by good-luck, the statutes of the realm are silent; now they are all silent about incarcerating sane men; besides, he gives no cases. What is an opinion without a precedent? a lawyer's guess. I thought so little of his opinion that I sent the case to a clever junior, who has got time to think before he writes." Colls entered soon after with the said junior's opinion. Mr. Compton opened it, and saying, "Now let us see what *he* says," read it to Alfred. It ran thus: —

"There was clearly a right of action under the common law, and it has been exercised. Anderdon *v.* Brothers; Paternoster *v.* Wynn, etc. Such a right can only be annulled by the express

terms of a statute; now the 8 and 9 Victoria, cap. 100, sect. 99, so annuls it as against the madhouse proprietor only. That, therefore, is the statutory exception, and tends to confirm the common right. If the facts are as represented (on which, of course, I can form no opinion), Mr. Hardie can safely sue the person who signed the order for his alleged false imprisonment.

"I agree with you that the usual course by praying the Court of Chancery for a Commission de Lunatico Inquirendo, is timorous, and rests on prejudice. Plt., if successful, is saddled with its own costs, and sometimes with Deft.'s, and obtains no compensation. It seems clear that a jury sitting at Nisi Prius can deal as well with the main fact as can a jury sitting by the order of the Chancellor; and I need not say the costs will go with their verdict, to say nothing of the damages, which may be heavy. On the other hand, an indictment is hazardous; and, I think, you can lose nothing by beginning with the suit. By having a shorthand writer at the trial, you may collect materials for an indictment, and also feel the pulse of the court; you can then confer upon the evidence with some counsel better versed in criminal law than myself. *My* advice is to sue Thomas Hardie, and declare in Tort.

(Signed) "BARROW.

"N.B. — I have been thus particular, because Hardie *v.* Hardie (if carried to a verdict) will probably be a leading case."

"Who shall decide when counsel disagree?" inquired Alfred, satirically.

"That depends on where they do it. If in court, the judge; if here, the attorney."

"You appear sanguine, Mr. Compton," said Alfred. "Perhaps you would not mind advancing me a little money. I've only half a crown."

"It is all ready for you in this drawer," said Compton, cheerfully. "See, thirty sovereigns. Then you need not go to a bank."

"What, you knew I should borrow?"

"Don't all my clients begin by bleeding *me?* It is the rule of this office."

"Then why don't you give up business?"

"Because I bleed the opposite attorney's client a pound or two more than my own bleeds me."

He then made Alfred sign a promissory note for the thirty pounds, advised him to keep snug for one week more, and promised to write to him in two days, and send Thomas Hardie's answer. Alfred left his address and went from Mr. Compton a lighter man. Convinced of his courage and prudence, he shifted one care off his own shoulders, and thought of love alone.

But, strange as it may appear, two cares are sometimes better for a man than one. Alfred, having now no worry to divert him from his deeper anxiety, was all love and jealousy, and quite overbalanced; the desire of his heart grew so strong, it overpowered alike his patience and his prudence. He jumped into a cab, and drove to all the firemen's stations on the Surrey side of the river, inquiring for Edward. At last he hit upon the right one, and learned that Julia lived in Pembroke Street, number unknown. He drove home to his lodgings, bought some ready-made clothes, and dressed like a gentleman, then told the cabman to drive to Pembroke Street. He knew he was acting imprudently, but he could not help it. And besides, Mr. Compton had now written to his uncle, and begun the attack: that would surely intimidate his enemies, and turn their thoughts to defence, not to fresh offence. However, catching sight of a gunsmith's shop on the way, he suddenly resolved to arm himself on the bare chance of an attack. He stopped the cab, went in and bought a double-barrelled pistol, with powder-flask, bullets, wads, and caps, complete. This he loaded in the cab, and felt quite prudent after it. The prudence of youth!

He paid off the cab in Pembroke Street, and set about the task of discovering Julia. He inquired at several houses, but was unsuccessful. Then he walked slowly all down the street, looking up at all the windows. And, I think, if he had done this the day before, he might have seen her, or she him. She was so often at the window now. But just then she had company to keep her in order.

He was unlucky in another respect. Edward came out of No. 66, and went up the street, when he himself was going down it not so very many yards off. If Alfred's face had only been turned the other way, he would have seen Edward, and all would have gone differently.

The stoutest hearts have their moments of weakness and deep dejection. Few things are more certain, and less realized by ordinary men, than this; from Palissy fighting with Enamel to Layard disinterring a city, this thing is so.

Unable to find Julia in the very street she inhabited, Alfred felt weak against fate. He said to himself, "If I find her, I shall perhaps wish I had never sought her."

In his hour of dejection stern reason would be heard, and asked him whether all Mrs. Archbold had said could be pure invention; and he was obliged to confess that was too unlikely. Then he felt so sick at heart, he was half minded to turn and fly the street. But there was a large yard close by him, entered by a broad and lofty gateway cut through one of the houses. The yard belonged to a dealer in hay; two empty wagons were there, but no men visible, being their dinner-time. Alfred slipped in here, and sat down on the shaft of a wagon, and let his courage ooze. He sighed and sighed, and feared to know his fate. And so he sat with his face in his hands, unmanned.

Presently a strain of music broke on his ear. It

seemed to come from the street. He raised his head to listen. He colored, his eyes sparkled; he stole out on tiptoe with wondering, inquiring face, into the street. Once there, he stood spell-bound, thrilling from his heart, that seemed now on fire, to his fingers' ends. For a heavenly voice was singing to the piano, just above his head; singing in earnest, making the very street ring. Already listeners were gathering, and a woman of the people said, "It's a soul singing without a body." Amazing good things are said in the streets. The voice was the voice of Julia; the song was "Aileen Aroon," the hymn of constancy. So sudden and full was the bliss, which poured into the long and sore-tried listener at this sudden answer to his fears, that tears of joy trembled in his eyes. "Wretch that I was to doubt her," he said; and unable to contain his longing, unable to wait and listen even to that which had changed his griefs and doubts into rapture, he was at the door in a moment. A servant opened it. "Miss Dodd?" he said, or rather panted; "you need not announce me. I am an old acquaintance." He could not bear any one should see the meeting between him and his beloved; he went up the steep and narrow stair, guided by the hymn of constancy.

He stopped at the door, his heart was beating so violently.

Then he turned the handle softly, and stepped into the drawing-room; it was a double room; he took two steps and was in the opening, and almost at Julia's back.

Two young clergymen were bending devotedly, one on each side of her; it was to them she was singing the hymn of constancy.

Alfred started back as if he had been stung; and the music stopped dead short.

For she had heard his step, and, woman-like, was look-

ing into her companions' eyes first, to see if her ear had deceived her. What she saw there brought her slowly round with a wild look. Her hands rose towards her face, and she shrank away sideways from him as if he was a serpent, and her dilated eyes looked over her cringing shoulder at him, and she was pale and red and pale and red a dozen times in as many seconds.

He eyed her sorrowfully and sternly, taking for shame that strange mixture of emotions which possessed her. And so they met.

Strange meeting for two true lovers, who had parted last upon their wedding-eve.

No doubt, if they had been alone, one or other would have spoken directly; but the situation was complicated by the presence of two rivals, and this tied their tongues. They devoured one another with their eyes in silence; and then Julia rose slowly to her feet, and began to tremble from head to foot, as she looked at him.

"Is this intrusion agreeable to you, Miss Dodd?" said Mr. Hurd respectfully, by way of courting her. She made no reply; but only looked wildly at Alfred still, and quivered visibly.

"Pray, sir," said Alfred, turning on Mr. Hurd, "have you any right to interfere between us two?"

"None whatever," said Julia, hastily. "Mr. Hurd, I need no one. I will permit no one to say a word to him. Mr. Hardie knows he cannot enter a house where I am — without an explanation."

"What, before a couple of curates?"

"Do not be insolent to my friends, sir," said Julia, panting.

This wounded Alfred deeply. "Oh, as you please," said he. "Only, if you put me on my defence before strangers, I shall, perhaps, put you to the blush before them."

"Why do you come here, sir?" said Julia, not deigning to notice his threat.

"To see my betrothed."

"Oh, indeed!" said she, bitterly; "in that case why have you postponed your visit so long?"

"I was in prison."

"In prison?"

"In the worst of all prisons; where I was put because I loved you; where I was detained because I persisted in loving you, you faithless, inconstant girl."

He choked at these words; she smiled, a faint uncertain smile. It died away, and she shook her head, and said sadly, —

"Defend yourself, and then call me as many names as you like. Where was this prison?"

"It was an asylum, a madhouse."

The girl stared at him bewildered. He put his hand into his pocket, and took Peggy's letter. "Read that," he said. She held it in her hand, and looked him in the face to divine the contents. "Read it," said he, almost fiercely; "that was the decoy." She held it shaking in her hands, and stared at it. I don't know whether she read it or not.

He went on: "The same villain who defrauded your father of his money, robbed me of my wife and my liberty. That Silverton House was a lunatic asylum, and ever since then (O Julia! the agony of that day) I have been confined in one or other of those hells, sane amongst the mad, till Drayton House took fire, and I escaped; for what? To be put on my defence by you. What have you suffered from our separation, compared with the manifold anguish I have endured, that you dare to receive the most injured and constant of mankind like this, you who have had your liberty all this time, and have consoled yourself for my absence with a couple of curates?"

"For shame," said Julia, blushing to the forehead, yet smiling in a way her companions could not understand.

"Miss Dodd, will you put up with these insults?" said Mr. Hurd.

"Ay, and a thousand more," cried Julia, radiant, "and thank Heaven for them; they prove his sincerity. You, who have thought proper to stay and hear *me* insult my betrothed, and put my superior on his defence, look how I receive his just rebuke. — Dear, cruelly used Alfred, I never doubted you in my heart, no, not for a moment; forgive me for taunting you to clear yourself, you who were always the soul of truth and honor. Forgive me. I too have suffered; for I thought my Alfred was dead. Forgive me."

And with this she was sinking slowly to her knees with the most touching grace, all blushes, tears, penitence, happiness, and love; but he caught her eagerly. "O God forbid!" he cried, and in a moment her head was on his shoulder, and they mingled their tears together.

It was Julia who recovered herself first, and shrank from him a little, and murmured, "We are not alone."

The misgiving came rather late; and they were alone.

The other gentlemen had comprehended at last that it was indelicate to remain: they had melted quietly away; and Peterson rushed down the street; but Hurd hung disconsolate about that very entry, where Alfred had just desponded before him.

"Sit by me, my poor darling, and tell me all," said Julia.

He began; but, ere he had told her about his first day at his first asylum, she moaned and turned faint at the recital, and her lovely head sank on his shoulder. He kissed her, and tried to comfort her, and said he would not tell her any more. But she said somewhat charac-

teristically, "I insist on your telling me all, all. It will kill me." Which did not seem to Alfred a cogent reason for continuing his narrative. He varied it by telling her that through all his misery the thought of her had sustained him. Alas, in the midst of their Elysium a rough voice was heard in the passage inquiring for Mr. Hardie. Alfred started up in dismay, for it was Rooke's voice. "I am undone," he cried. "They are coming to take me again; and, if they do, they will drug me; I am a dead man."

"Fly!" cried Julia; "fly! up-stairs: the leads."

He darted to the door, and out on the landing.

It was too late. Rooke had just turned the corner of the stairs, and saw him. He whistled and rushed after Alfred. Alfred bounded up the next flight of stairs; but, even as he went, his fighting blood got up; he remembered his pistol; he drew it, turned on the upper landing, and levelled the weapon full at Rooke's forehead. The man recoiled with a yell, and got to a respectful distance on the second landing. There he began to parley. "Come, Mr. Hardie, sir," said he, "that is past a joke; would you murder a man?"

"It's no murder to kill an assassin in defence of life or liberty; and I'll kill you, Rooke, as I would kill a wasp, if you lay a finger on me."

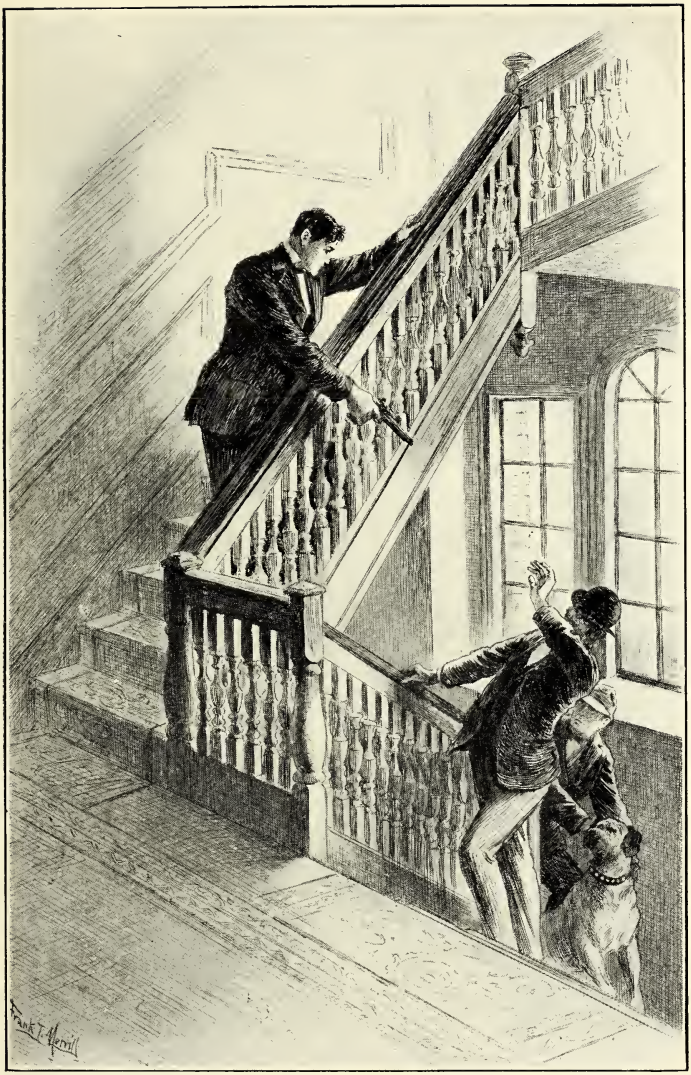
"Do you hear that?" shouted Rooke to some one below.

"Ay, I hear," replied the voice of Hayes.

"Then loose the dog. And run in after him."

There was a terrible silence; then a scratching was heard below; and, above, the deadly click of the pistol-hammers brought to full cock.

And then there was a heavy, pattering rush, and Vulcan came charging up the stairs like a lion. He was half-muzzled; but that Alfred did not know: he stepped



"I'LL KILL YOU, ROOKE . . . IF YOU LAY A FINGER ON ME."

forward and fired at the tremendous brute somewhat unsteadily, and missed him by an inch; the bullet glanced off the stairs and entered the wall within a yard of Rooke's head: ere Alfred could fire again, the huge brute leaped on him and knocked him down like a child, and made a grab at his throat; Alfred, with admirable presence of mind, seized a banister, and, drawing himself up, put the pistol to Vulcan's ear, and fired the other barrel just as Rooke rushed up the stairs to secure his prisoner; the dog bounded into the air and fell over dead with shattered skull, leaving Alfred bespattered with blood and brains, and half blinded; but he struggled up, and tore the banister out in doing so, just as a heavy body fell forward at his feet; it was Rooke stumbling over Vulcan's carcass so unexpectedly thrown in his path; Alfred cleared his eyes with his hand, and as Rooke struggled up, lifted the banister high above his head, and, with his long sinewy arm and elastic body, discharged a blow frightful to look at, for youth, strength, skill, and hate all swelled and rose and struck together in that one furious gesture. If the wood had held, the skull must have gone. As it was, the banister broke over the man's head (and one-half went spinning up to the ceiling); the man's head cracked under the banister like a glass bottle, and Rooke lay flat and mute, with the blood running from his nose and ears. Alfred hurled the remnant of the banister down at Hayes and the others, and darted into a room (it was Julia's bedroom), and was heard to open the window, and then drag furniture to the door, and barricade it. This done, he went to load his pistol, which he thought he had slipped into his pocket after felling Rooke. He found to his dismay it was not there. The fact was, it had slipped past his pocket and fallen down.

During the fight, shriek upon shriek issued from the

drawing-room. But now all was still. On the stairs lay Vulcan dead, Rooke senseless; below, Julia in a dead faint. And all in little more than a minute.

Dr. Wolf arrived with the police and two more keepers, new ones in the place of Wales and Garrett discharged; and urged them to break into the bedroom and capture the maniac; but first he was cautious enough to set two of them to watch the back of the house. "There," he said, "where that load of hay is going in: that is the way to it. Now stand you in the yard and watch."

This last mandate was readily complied with; for there was not much to be feared on the stones below from a maniac self-immured on the second story. But to break open that bedroom-door was quite another thing. The stairs were like a shambles already, a chilling sight to the eyes of mercenary valor.

Rooke was but just sensible; the others hung back. But presently the pistol was found sticking in a pool of gore. This put a new face on the matter; and Dr. Wolf himself showed the qualities of a commander. He sent down word to his sentinels in the yard to be prepared for any attempt on Alfred's part, however desperate; and he sent a verbal message to a stately gentleman who was sitting anxious in lodgings over the way, after bribing high and low, giving out money like water to secure the recapture, and so escape what he called his unnatural son's vengeance; for he knew him to be by nature bold and vindictive like himself. After these preliminaries, Dr. Wolf headed his remaining forces, to wit, two keepers and two policemen, and thundered at the bedroom-door, and summoned Alfred to surrender.

Now among the spectators who watched and listened with bated breath was one to whom this scene had an interest of its own. Mr. Hurd, disconcerted by Alfred's sudden reappearance and the lovers' reconciliation, had

hung about the entry very miserable; for he was sincerely attached to Julia. But while he was in this stupor came the posse to recapture Alfred, and he heard them say so. Then the shots were fired within, then Wolf and his men got in, and Mr. Hurd, who was now at the door, got in with them to protect Julia, and see this dangerous and inconvenient character disposed of. He was looking demurely on at a safish distance when his late triumphant rival was summoned to surrender.

No reply.

Dr. Wolf coaxed.

No reply.

Dr. Wolf told him he had police as well as keepers, and resistance would be idle.

No reply.

Dr. Wolf ordered his men to break in the door.

After some little delay, one of the keepers applied a chisel, while a policeman held his truncheon ready to defend the operator. The lock gave way; but the door could not open for furniture.

After some further delay, they took it off its hinges, and the room stood revealed.

To their surprise, no rush was made at them.

The maniac was not even in sight.

"He is down upon his luck," whispered one of the new keepers; "we shall find him crouched somewhere." They looked under the bed. He was not there. They opened a cupboard: three or four dresses hung from wooden pegs; they searched the gowns most minutely, but found no maniac hid in their ample folds. Presently some soot was observed lying in the grate, and it was inferred he had gone up the chimney.

On inspection, the opening appeared almost too narrow. Then Dr. Wolf questioned his sentinels in the yard. "Have you been there all the time?"

"Yes, sir."

"Seen nothing?"

"No, sir. And our eyes have never been off the window and the leads."

Here was a mystery, and not a clew to its solution. The window was open, but five and twenty feet above the paved yard: had he leaped down, he must have been dashed to pieces.

Many tongues began to go at once, in the midst of which Edward burst in, and found the two dead men of contemporary history consisted of a dead dog and a stunned man, who, having a head like a bullet, was now come to himself and vowing vengeance. He found Julia very pale, supported and consoled by Mr. Hurd. He was congratulating her on her escape from a dangerous maniac.

She rose and tottered away from him to her brother, and clung to him. He said what he could to encourage her, then deposited her in an arm-chair and went upstairs; he soon satisfied himself Alfred was not in the house. On this he requested Dr. Wolf and his men to leave the premises. The doctor demurred. Edward insisted, and challenged him to show a magistrate's warrant for entering a private house. The doctor was obliged to own he had none. Edward then told the policemen they were engaged in an illegal act; the police had no authority to take part in these captures. Now the police knew that very well, but, being handsomely bribed, they had presumed, and not for the first time, upon that ignorance of law which is deemed an essential part of a private citizen's accomplishments in modern days. In a word, by temper and firmness and a smattering of law gathered from the omniscient *'Tiser*, Edward cleared his castle of the lawless crew. But they paraded the street and watched the yard till dusk, when its proprietor ran rusty and turned them out.

Julia sat between Edward and Mr. Hurd, with her head thrown back and her eyes closed, and received in silence their congratulations on her escape. She was thinking of his. When they had quite done, she opened her eyes and said, "Send for Dr. Sampson. Nobody else knows any thing. Oh, pray, pray, pray send for Dr. Sampson."

Mr. Hurd said he would go for Dr. Sampson.

She thanked him warmly.

Then she crept away to her bedroom, and locked herself in, and sat on the hearth-rug, and thought, and thought, and recalled every word and tone of her Alfred, comparing things old and new.

Dr. Sampson was a few miles out of town visiting a patient. It was nine o'clock in the evening when he got Julia's note, but he came on to Pembroke Street at once. Dr. Wolf and his men had retired, leaving a sentinel in the street, on the bare chance of Alfred returning. Dr. Sampson found brother and sister sitting sadly but lovingly together. Julia rose upon his entrance. "O Dr. Sampson! now *is* he what they say he is?"

"How can I tell till I see 'm?" objected the doctor.

"But, you know, they call people mad who are nothing of the kind; for you said so."

Sampson readily assented to this. "Why, it was but last year a surjin came to me with one Jackson, a tailor, and said, 'Just sign a certificate for this man: his wife's mad.'—'Let me see her,' sid I. 'What for,' sis he; 'when her own husband applies?'—'Excuse me,' sis I, 'I'm not a bat, I'm Saampson.' I went to see her; she was nairvous and excited. 'Oh, I know what you come about,' said she. 'But you are mistaken.' I questioned her kindly, and she told me her husband was a great trile t' her nairves. I refused to sign. On that disn't the tailor drown himself in the canal nixt day? He was

the madman; and she knew it all the time, but wouldn't tell us; and that's a woman all over."

"Well then," said Julia, hopefully.

"Ay, but," said Sampson, "these cases are exceptions, after all; and the chances are nine to one he's mad. Daun't ye remember that was one of the solutions I offered ye, when he levanted on his wedding-day?" He added, satirically, "And couldn't all that logic keep in a little reason?"

This cynical speech struck Julia to the heart; she could not bear it, and retired to her own room.

Then Dr. Sampson saw his mistake, and said to Edward, with some concern, "Maircy on us, she is not in love with him still, is she? I thought that young parson was the man now."

Edward shook his head, but declined to go much into a topic so delicate as his sister's affections; and just then an alarming letter was delivered from Mrs. Dodd. She wrote to the effect that David, favored by the wind, had run into Portsmouth harbor before their eyes, and had disappeared, hidden, it was feared, by one of those low publicans, who provide bad ships with sailors, receiving a commission. On this an earnest conversation between Sampson and Edward.

It was interrupted in its turn.

Julia burst suddenly into the room, pale and violently excited, clasping her hands and crying, "He is *there*. His voice is like a child's. Oh, help me! He is hurt. He is dying."

CHAPTER XIV.

Julia, as I have said, went to her own room, wounded unintentionally by a chance speech: she sat down sick at heart, and presently opened her window and looked out upon the starry night, and wondered where Alfred was now; that Alfred for whom nobody else had a human heart, it seemed. "Alfred! my poor Alfred!" she sighed, and half expected to hear him reply. Then she said to herself, "They all called you false but me, yet I was right; and now they all call you mad, but not I: I believe nothing against you. You are my own Alfred still. Where have the wretches driven you to?" At this her feelings carried her away, and she cried aloud on him despairingly, and leaned upon the window-sill, and the tears ran fast for him.

Presently out of the silence of the night seemed to struggle a faint but clear voice: —

"Julia!"

She started, and a muffled scream came from her. Then she listened, all trembling. Again the voice sighed, faintly but clear, "Julia!"

"Alfred?" said she, quavering.

"Yes. Pray be cautious: give no alarm. The house is watched; bring Edward."

She flew down-stairs and electrified Edward and Sampson with the news. "Oh, promise me not to betray him!" she cried.

"Hut!" said the doctor, starting to his feet, "what should we betray him for? I'll cure him for you. I

can cure any lunatic that has lucid intervals. Where is he?"

"Follow me!" gasped Julia. "Stay. I'll get rid of the servants first. I'll not play the fool, and betray him to his enemies." She sent Sarah eastward, and Jane westward, and then led the way through the kitchen-door into the yard.

They all searched about, and found nothing. Then Julia begged them to be silent. She whispered, "Alfred," and instantly a faint voice issued from the top of a wagon laden with hay and covered with a tarpaulin: "Julia!"

They all stood staring.

"Who are those with you?" asked Alfred, uneasily.

"Only friends, dear. Edward and Dr. Sampson."

"Ned, old fellow," groaned Alfred, "you pulled me out of the fire; won't you help me out of this? I think my leg is broken."

At this Julia wrung her hands, and Edward ran into the house for his rope, and threw it over the wagon. He told Julia and Sampson to hold on by one end, and, seizing the other, was up on the wagon in a moment. He felt about till he came to a protuberance; and that was Alfred under the tarpaulin, in which he had cut breathing-holes with his penknife. Edward sent Julia in for a carving-knife, and soon made an enormous slit; through this a well-known figure emerged into the moonlight, and seemed wonderfully tall to have been so hidden. His hands being uninjured, he easily descended the rope, and stood on one leg holding it. Then Sampson and Edward put each an arm under his, and helped him into the house.

After the body the mind. That is the rule throughout creation. They examined, not his reason, but his leg. Julia stood by with clasped hands, and a face beaming

with pity and anxiety, that repaid his pain. Sampson announced there were no bones broken, but a bad sprain, and the limb very red and swollen. "Now," inquired he briskly of the company, "what is the practice in sprains? Why, leeches and cold water."

Edward offered at once to run and get them.

"Are ye mad?" was the reply. "Daun't I tell ye that is the *practice?* And isn't the practice sure to be th' opposite of the remedy? So get water as hot as he can bear it, and no leeches."

Julia remonstrated angrily. "Is this a case for jesting?"

"Deevil a jest in it," replied the doctor. "Well then, if ye must know, th' opera-dancers apply hot water to sprains: now what is their interest? t' expedite the cure; and the faculty apply cold water: and what is their interest? to procrastinate the cure, and make a long job of it. So just hold your tongues, and ring for hot water."

Julia did not ring: she beckoned Edward, and they flew out and soon brought a foot-pan of hot water. Edward then removed Alfred's shoes and stockings, and Julia bared her lovely arms, and blushed like a rose.

Alfred divined her intention. "Dear Julia," he said, "I won't let you: that is too high an honor. Sarah can do that."

But Julia's blood was up. "Sarah?" said she contemptuously, "she is too heavy-handed; and — hold your tongue: I don't take my orders from you;" then more humbly to the doctor, "I am a district visitor: I nurse all manner of strangers, and he says I must leave his poor suffering leg to the servants."

"Unnatural young monster!" said the doctor. "G'im a good nip."

Julia followed this advice by handling Alfred's swollen

ankle with a tenderness so exquisite, and pressing it with the full sponge so softly, that her divine touch soothed him as much or more than the water. After nursing him into the skies a minute or two, she looked up blushing in his face, and said, coaxingly, "Are you mad, dear Alfred? Don't be afraid to tell us the truth. The madder you are, the more you need me to take care of you, you know."

Alfred smiled at this sapient discourse, and said he was not the least mad, and hoped to take care of *her* as soon as his ankle was well enough. This closed that sweet mouth of hers exceeding tight, and her face was seen no more for awhile, but hid by bending earnestly over her work; only as her creamy poll turned pink, the color of that hidden face was not hard to divine.

Then Edward asked Alfred how in the world he had escaped, and got into that wagon. The thing was incredible. "Mirawculous!" said Dr. Sampson in assent.

"No," said Alfred, "it looks stranger to you than it is. The moment I found my pistol was gone, I determined to run. I looked down and saw a spout with a great ornamental mouth, almost big enough to sit on; and, while I was looking greedily at it, three horses came into the yard drawing a load of hay. The wagoner was busy clearing the pavement with his wheel, and the wagon almost stopped a moment right under me. There was a lot of loose hay on the top. I let myself down and hung by the spout a moment, and then leaped on to the loose hay. Unfortunately there were the hard trusses beneath it, and so I got my sprain. Oh, I say, didn't it hurt? However, I crept under the hay and hid myself, and saw Wolf's men come into the yard. By-and-by a few drops of rain fell, and some fellows chucked down a tarpaulin from the loft, and nearly smothered me, so I cut a few air-holes with my penknife. And there I lay,

Heaven knows how long: it seemed two days. At last I saw an angel at a window: I called her by the name she bears on earth: to my joy she answered, and here I am, as happy as a prince among you all, and devilish hungry."

"What a muff I was, not to think of that!" said Edward, and made for the larder.

"Dear doctor," said Julia, lifting a Madonna-like face with swimming eyes, "I see no change in him: he is very brave, and daring, and saucy. But so he always was. To be sure he says extravagant things, and stares one out of countenance with his eyes: well, and so he always did — ever since *I* knew him."

"Mayn't I even *look* my gratitude?" whined Alfred.

"Yes, but you need not stare it."

"It's your own fault, Miss Julee," said Sampson. "With you fomenting his sprain the creature's fomenting his own insensate passion. Break every bone in a puppy's body, and it's a puppy still; and it doesn't do to spoil puppies, as ye're spoiling this one. Nlist me, ye vagabin. Take your eyes off the lady, and look *me* in the face, — if ye can; and tell me how you came to leave us all in the lurch on your wedding morn."

Julia fired up. "It was not his fault, poor thing! he was decoyed away after that miserable money. Ah, you may laugh at me for hating money, but have I not good reason to hate it?"

"Whist, whist, y' impetuous cracter, and let him tell his own tale."

Alfred, thus invited, delivered one of his calm, luminous statements, which had hitherto been listened to so coldly by one official after another. But the effect was mighty different, falling now on folk not paid to pity. As for Dr. Sampson, he bounced up very early in the narrative, and went striding up and down the room: he was pale with indignation, and his voice trembled with

emotion; and every now and then he broke in on the well-governed narrative with oaths and curses, and observations of this kind: "Why dinnt ye kill um? I'd have killed um. I'd just have taken the first knife and killed um. Man, our liberty is our life. Dith to whoever attacks it!"

And so Edward, coming in with Alfred's dinner on a tray, found the *soi-disant* maniac delivering his wrongs with the lofty serenity of an ancient philosopher discussing the wrongs of another, Julia crying furtively into the tub, and the good physician trampling and raving about the room, like what the stoical narrator was accused of being. Edward stopped and looked at them all over the tray. "Well," said he, "if there's a madman in the room, it is not Hardie. Ahem!"

"Madman? ye young ijjit!" roared the doctor; "he's no madder than I am."

"Heaven forbid," said Alfred, dryly.

"No madder than *you* are, ye young pump."

"That's an ungenerous skit on Edward's profession," objected the maniac.

"Be quite now, chattering," said the excited doctor; "I tell ye ye niver were mad, and niver will be. It's just the most heartless imposture, the most rascally fraud, I've ever caught the Mad Ox out in. I'll expose it. Gimme pninkpapr. Man, they'll take y' again if we don't mind. But I'll stop that: these ineequities can only be done in the dark. I'll shed the light of day on 'em. Eat your dinner, and hold your tongue a minute, if ye can." The doctor had always a high sense of *Alfred's* volubility.

He went to work, and soon produced a letter headed "Private Madhouses." In this he related pithily Alfred's incarceration, and the present attempt to recapture him, with the particulars of his escape. "That

will interest th' enemy," said he, dryly. He vouched for Alfred's sanity at both dates, and pledged himself to swear to it in a court of law. He then inquired what it availed to have sent one tyrant to Phalaris and another to Versailles in defence of our liberty, since after all that liberty lies grovelling at the mercy of Dr. Pill-box and Mr. Sawbones, and a single designing relative? Then he drew a strong picture of this free-born British citizen skulking and hiding at this moment from a gang of rogues and conspirators who, in France and other civilized countries that brag less of liberty than we do, would be themselves flying as criminals from the officers of justice; and he wound up with a warm appeal to the press to cast its shield over the victim of bad laws and foul practices. "In England," said he, "Justice is the daughter of Publicity. Throughout the world deeds of villany are done every day in kid gloves, but, with us, at all events, they have to be done on the sly; here lies our true moral eminence as a nation. Utter then your '*fiat lux*;' cast the full light of publicity on this dark villany; and behold, it will wither, and your oppressed and injured fellow-citizen be safe from that very hour."

He signed it and read it out to them, or rather roared it. But he had written it so well, he could not make it bad by delivery. Indeed, he was a masterly writer of English, you must know. Julia was delighted, but Alfred shook his head. "The editor will not put it in."

"Th' editor! D'ye think I'm so green as to trust t' any one editor? D'ye think I've lived all these years and not learned what poor cowardly things men are? Moral courage! where can you find it, except in the dickshinary? Few to the world their honest thoughts *avow;* the groveller policy robs justice *now*, —

> And none but Sampson dares to lift a hond
> Against the curst corruption of the lond.

Now, lad, I'm off to my printer with this. They are working night and day just now: there will be two hundred copies printed in half an hour."

"And me, doctor," said Julia. "Am poor I to have no hand in it? How cruel of you! Oh, pray, pray, pray let me help a little."

"Put on your bonnet, then, directly," said he; "in war never lose a minute."

"But I am so afraid they may be lying in wait for him outside."

"Then we'll give them a good hiding: there are three of us; all good men and stanch," said the indomitable doctor.

"No, no," said the pugnacious Alfred. "Julia does not like fighting: I heard her screaming all the time I was defending myself on the stairs; let us be prudent: let us throw dust in their eyes. Put me on a bonnet and cloak."

"And a nice little woman you'll make, ye fathom."

"Oh, I can stoop — to conquer."

Julia welcomed this plan almost with glee, and she and Edward very soon made a handsome brazen-looking trollop six feet high. Then it had to stoop, and Edward and Julia helped it out to the carriage, under the very noses of a policeman and a keeper, who were watching for Alfred: seeing which — oh, frailty of woman! — the district visitor addressed it aloud as her aunt, and begged it to take care: which she afterwards observed was acting a falsehood, and "where was her Christianity?"

Alfred was actually not recognized: the carriage bowled away to the great printing-house; it was on that side the water. The foreman entered into the thing with spirit, and divided the copy, small as it was, among two or three compositors: so a rough proof was ready in an incredibly short time; the doctor corrected it: and soon

they began to work off the copies. The foreman found them Mitchell's newspaper list, and envelopes by the hundred, and while the copies were pouring in, all hands were folding and addressing them to the London and provincial editors. The office lent the stamps. The doctor drove Alfred to his own lodgings, and forbade him to reappear in Pembroke Street until the letter should come out in the London journals.

That night the letters were all posted, and at daybreak were flying north, south, east, and west. In the afternoon the letter came out in four London evening papers, and the next morning the metropolis and the whole kingdom were ringing with them, and the full blaze of publicity burst upon this dark deed.

Ay, stout Sampson, well you knew mankind, and well you knew the nation you lived in. Richard Hardie, in the very act of setting detectives to find Alfred's lurking place, ran his nose against this letter in the *Globe*. He collapsed at the sight of it; and wrote directly to Dr. Wolf enclosing it, and saying that it would be unadvisable to make any fresh attempt. His letter was crossed by one from Dr. Wolf, containing Sampson's thunderbolt extracted from the *Sun*, and saying that no earthly consideration should induce him to meddle with Alfred *now*. Richard Hardie flung himself into the train, and went down to his brother at Clare Court.

He was ill at ease. He felt like some great general, who has launched many attacks against the foe, very successful at first, then less successful, then repulsed with difficulty, then repulsed with ease, till at last the foe stands before him impregnable. Then he feels that ere long that iron enemy will attack him in turn, and that he, exhausted by his own onslaughts, must defend himself how he can. Yet there was a pause; he passed a whole quiet peaceful day with his brother, assuring him that

the affair would go no further on either side; but in his secret soul he felt this quiet day was but the ominous pause between two great battles: one of the father against the son, the other of the son against the father.

And he was right: the very next day the late defender attacked, and in earnest. But for certain reasons I prefer to let another relate it: —

HARDIE *vs.* HARDIE.

DEAR SIR, — If you had been in my office when I received your favor of yesterday relating deft.'s ruffian-like assault, you would have seen the most ridiculous sight in nature — *videlicet*, an attorney in a passion. I threw professional courtesy to the winds, and sent Colls off to Clare Court to serve the writ personally. Next day, he found the deft. walking in his garden with Mr. Richard Hardie. Having learned from the servant which was his man, he stepped up and served copy of the writ in the usual way. Deft. turned pale, and his knees knocked together, and Colls thinks he mistook himself for a felon, and was going to ask for mercy, but Mr. Richard stopped him, and said his attorneys were Messrs. Heathfield, in Chancery Lane; and was this the way Mr. Compton did business? serving a writ personally on a gentleman in weak health. So Colls, who can sneer in his quiet way, told him "No," but the invalid had declined to answer my letter, and the invalid had made a violent attack upon our client's person, avoiding his attorney, "so, as his proceedings are summary, we meet him in kind," says little Colls. "Oho," says Mr. Richard, "you are a wit, are you? Come and have some luncheon." This was to take him away from the weaker brother, I take it. He gave Colls an excellent luncheon, and some admirable conversation on policy and finance: and when he was going, says this agreeable host, "Well, Mr. ——, you have had your bellyful of chicken and Madeira; and your client shall have his bellyful of law." And this Colls considers emphatic but coarse.

I am yours faithfully, JOHN COMPTON.

P. S. — Colls elicited that no further attempt will be made to capture you. It seems some injudicious friend of yours has been writing to the newspapers. Pray stop that.

On receiving this letter, Alfred bought another double pistol, loaded it, hired a body-guard of two prizefighters, and with these at his heels repaired to 66 Pembroke Street. No enemy was near: the press had swept the street alike of keepers and police with one Briarian gesture. He found Julia and Edward in great anxiety about their father. The immediate cause was a letter from Mrs. Dodd, which Edward gave him to read; but not till he had first congratulated him heartily on the ægis of the press being thrown over him. "The '*Tiser* has a leader on it," said he.

Mrs. Dodd's letter ran thus: —

My dear, dear Children, — I am coming home to you heart-broken, without your poor father. I saw an East-Indian ship go to sea, and some instinct whispered, Suppose he should be on board that ship! But, foolishly, I did not utter my thoughts: because they call these instincts women's fancies. But now even Mr. Green thinks he is gone to sea; for the town has been ransacked, and no trace of him can we find. I met my cousin, Captain Bazalgette, here, and he is promoted to the Vulture frigate, and sails to-day. I have told him all our misfortunes, and he has promised to overhaul that merchant ship if he comes up with her: but I *can see by the way his eye shuns mine* he has no real hopes. His ship is the swifter, but he may pass her in the night. And then he is bound for New Zealand, not India. I told Reginald my poor husband's expression of face is altered by his affliction, and that he takes himself for a common sailor, and has his medal still round his neck. Our cousin is very kind, and will do all he can. God can protect my darling at sea, as He has ashore: and in His power alone have I any trust. Any further stay here is vain: my heart, too, yearns for my other treasures, and dreads lest whilst I am here, and because I am here, some evil should befall you too. Expect me soon after this letter, and let us try and comfort one another under this the heaviest of all our many troubles.

With sad heart, I am,
Both my darlings' loving mother and friend,
Lucy Dodd.

In the discussion of this letter Alfred betrayed a slight defect of character. He pooh-poohed the calamity: said David had now a chance, and a good one, of being cured: whereas confinement was one of the common causes of insanity even in sane persons. And he stoutly maintained that David's going to sea was a happy inspiration. Edward colored, but deigned no reply. Julia was less patient, and though she was too loving and too womanly to tell Alfred to his face he was deceiving himself and arguing thus indirectly to justify himself in taking her father out of the asylum at all, yet she saw it, and it imparted a certain coldness into her replies. Alfred noticed this, and became less confident, and louder, and prodigiously logical.

He was still flowing on with high, imperious voice, which I suppose overpowered the sound of Mrs. Dodd's foot, when she entered suddenly, pale and weary, in her travelling-dress.

Alfred stopped, and they all started to their feet.

At sight of Alfred she stood dumfoundered a single moment; then uttered a faint shriek; and looked at him with unutterable terror.

He stood disconcerted.

Julia ran, and throwing her arms around Mrs. Dodd's neck, entreated her not to be afraid of him: he was not mad; Dr. Sampson said so. Edward confirmed her words; and then Julia poured out the story of his wrongs with great gushes of natural eloquence that might have melted a rock, and, as anti-climax is part of a true woman, ended innocently by begging her mother not to look so unkindly at him; and his ankle so sprained, and him in such pain. For the first time in her life Mrs. Dodd was deaf to her daughter's natural eloquence; it was remarkable how little her countenance changed while Julia appealed; she stood looking askant with horror at Alfred all

through that gentle, eloquent appeal. But nevertheless her conduct showed she had heard every word: as soon as ever her daughter's voice stopped, she seemed to dilate bodily, and moved towards Alfred pale and lowering. Yes, for once this gentle quiet lady looked terrible. She confronted Alfred. "Is this true, sir?" said she, in a low stern voice. "Are you not insane? Have you *never* been bereft of your reason?"

"No, Mrs. Dodd; I have not."

"Then what have you done with my husband, sir?"

CHAPTER XV.

It was a thunderbolt. Alfred hung his head, and said humbly, "I did but go up-stairs for one moment to wash my hands for dinner; and he was gone."

Mrs. Dodd went on in her low, stern voice, almost as if he had not answered her at all: "By what right did you assume the charge of him? Did I authorize you to take him from the place where he was safe, and under my eye?"

Alfred replied sullenly: "He was not very safe, for he was almost burned to death. The fire liberated him, not I. After the fire I ran away from him: he followed me; and then what could I do? I made the best of it; and gave up my own desires to try and cure him. He longed for the sea: I tried to indulge him: I hoped to bring him back to you sane: but fate was against me. I am the most unfortunate of men."

"Mr. Hardie," said Mrs. Dodd, "what you have done was the act of a madman; and, if I believed you to be anything *but* a madman, the sight of you would be intolerable to me; for you have made me a widow, and my children orphans."

With this she gave a great shudder, and retired in tears.

Alfred rose, pale and defiant. "That is *her* notion of justice," said he bitterly; "pray is it yours, you two?"

"Well, since you ask my opinion," said Edward, "I think it was rather presumptuous of you to undertake the care of my father: and, having undertaken it, you

ought not to have left him a moment out of your sight."

"Oh, that is your opinion, is it? And you, dear Julia?"

Julia made no reply, but hid her face in her hands and sighed deeply.

"I see," said Alfred, sorrowfully. "Even you are against me at heart. You judge by the event, not the motive. There is no justice in this world for me. I'm sick of life. I have no right to keep the mistress of the house out of her own room; there, I'll go; my heart is broken. No, it is not, and never shall be, by anything that breathes. Thank Heaven I have got one friend left in this bitter world, and I'll make her the judge whether I have deserved this last injustice. *I'll go to my sister.*"

He jumped up and hobbled slowly across the room, while Julia and Edward sat chilled to the bone by those five little words, so simple, so natural, yet so incredible, and to the hearers so awful. They started, they shuddered, they sat petrified, staring at him, while he hobbled across the room to go to his sister.

As he opened the door to go out, he heard stout Edward groan and Julia utter a low wail. He stood confounded a moment. Then he hobbled down a stair or two. But, ere he had gone far, there was a hasty whispering in the drawing-room, and Edward came after him in great agitation, and begged him to return; Julia *must* speak with him. He turned, and his face brightened. Edward saw that, and turned his own face away and stammered out, "Forget what I said to you. I am your friend, and always must be for *her* sake. No, no, I cannot go into that room with you; I'll go and comfort mamma. Hardie, old fellow, we are very unhappy, all of us. We are too unhappy to quarrel."

These kind words soothed Alfred's sore heart. He

brightened up and entered the drawing-room. He found Julia standing in the middle of it, the color of ashes. Alfred was alarmed. "You are unwell, dearest," he cried; "you will faint. What have I done with my ungoverned temper?" He moved towards her with a face full of concern.

"No, Alfred," said she, solemnly, "I am not the least ill. It is sorrow, deep sorrow for one I love better than all the world. Sit down beside me, my poor Alfred; and — God help me to speak to him!"

Alfred began to feel dire misgivings.

"Yes," said she, "I love you too well to let any hand but mine wound you." And here she took his sinewy hand with her soft palm. "I want to soften it in the telling, and ah, how can I? Oh, why can I not throw myself, body and soul, between you and all trouble, all sorrow?"

"My Julia," said Alfred, gravely, "something has happened to Jane."

"Yes, Alfred. She met with a terrible accident."

"Ah!"

"She was struck by an unfortunate man; he was not in his right mind."

"Struck? My sister struck? What, was there no man by?"

"No. Edward nearly killed him afterwards."

"God bless him!"

"Alfred, be patient. It was too late."

"What, is she hurt seriously? Is she disfigured?"

"No, Alfred," said Julia, solemnly, "she is not disfigured: oh, far from that."

"Julia, you alarm me. This comes of shutting her brother up. May Heaven's eternal curse light on those who did it. My poor little sister! How you weep, Julia. My heart is lead."

"I weep for you, darling, not for her."

"Ah, that is how they talk when those we love are — One word! I shall never see my poor little Jenny again, shall I?"

"Yes, Alfred, if you will but follow her steps and believe in Him, who soothed her last hour, and made her face shine with joy, like an angel's, while we all wept around; oh, dear, oh, dear, oh, dear! he *said* he had but one true friend in the world. Alas! it is so; you have but me, now, who pity you and love you more than heart can utter; my own, my beloved, my bereaved."

What could soften such a shock as this? It fell, and his anguish was frightful, all the more so that he ascribed the calamity to his imprisonment, and mingled curses and threats of vengeance with his bursts of grief. He spurned the consolations of religion: he said heaven was as unjust as earth, as cruel as hell.

She cried out, and stopped his mouth with her hand; she almost forced him to kneel beside her, and prayed aloud for him; and when at last his agony found vent in tears, she put her innocent arms round his neck and wept with him.

Every now and then the poor fellow would almost shriek with remorse. "Oh, if I had only been kinder to her! if I had but been kinder to her!"

"You were kind to her," said Julia, softly but firmly.

"No, no; I was always sneering at her. And why? I knew her religion was sincere; but my little mind fixed on a few phrases she had picked up from others, and I" — He could say no more, but groaned with anguish. And let his remorse be a caution to us all. Bereaved we all must be, who live on and on: but *this*, bereavement's bitterest drop, we may avoid.

"Alfred," said Julia, "do not torment yourself. We girls care little about a few sarcasms; it is the cold

heart that wounds us. You loved Jane, and she knew it well, and joyed in it. You were kinder to her than you think, and so her dying thoughts were for you. It was for you she asked, and made your father send for you, and poor I hoped you would come. And, dearest, her last act was to write a few words to you, and trust them to her who she knew loved you better than heart can utter. Since it was her wish, let us try and read them together, the last words of a saint (I have never seen them), and, if they do not prove words of love, then I will let you think you were not a good brother to her you and I, and poor, poor Edward, have lost."

He made a sad sign of assent, and Julia rose and got the enclosure. But, as Jane's last-written words reappeared on the scene in a somewhat remarkable way, I will only say here, that both these poor young things tried in vain to read them, and both in turn burst out sobbing, so that they could not; so they held the paper, and tried to see the words out of their streaming eyes. And these two mourners had the room to themselves till midnight; for even Mrs. Dodd's hostility respected Alfred then; and as for Julia, she was one of those who rise with the occasion; she was half wife, half angel from heaven, to her bereaved lover through all those bitter hours.

CHAPTER XVI.

No life was ever yet a play: I mean an unbroken sequence of dramatic incidents. Calms will come: unfortunately for the readers, happily for the read. And I remember seeing it objected to novelists, by a young gentleman just putting his foot for the first time into "Criticism," that the writers aforesaid suppress the small intermediate matters which in real life come by the score between each brilliant event, and so present the ordinary and the extraordinary parts of life in false proportions. Now, if this remark had been offered by way of contrast between events themselves and all mortal attempts to reproduce them upon paper or the stage, it would have been philosophical; but it was a strange error to denounce the practice as distinctive of fiction, for it happens to be the one trait the novelist and dramatist have in common with the evangelist. The Gospels skip fifteen years of the most interesting life creation has witnessed; they relate Christ's birth in full, but hurry from his boyhood to the more stirring events of his thirtieth and subsequent years. And all the inspired histories do much the same thing. The truth is, that epics, dramas, novels, histories, chronicles, reports of trials at law, in a word, all narratives, true or fictitious, except those which, true or fictitious, nobody reads, abridge the uninteresting facts as nature never did, and dwell as nature never did on the interesting ones.

Can nothing, however, be done to restore, in the reader's judgment, that just balance of the "sensational"

and the "soporific," which all writers, that have readers, disturb? Nothing, I think, without his own assistance. But surely something with it. And, therefore, I throw myself on the intelligence of my readers, and ask them to realize that henceforth, pages are no strict measure of time, and that to a year big with strange events, on which I have therefore dilated in this story, succeeded a year in which few brilliant things happened to the personages of this tale: in short, a year to be skimmed by chronicler or novelist, and yet (mind you) a year of three hundred and sixty-five days, six hours, or thereabouts, and one in which the quiet, unobtrusive troubles of our friends' hearts, especially the female hearts, their doubts, divisions, distresses, did not remit, far from it. Now this year I propose to divide into topics, and go by logical rather than natural sequence of events.

THE LOVERS.

Alfred came every day to see Julia, and Mrs. Dodd invariably left the room at his knock.

At last Julia proposed to Alfred not to come to the house for the present, but to accompany her on her rounds as district visitor. To see and soothe the bitter calamities of the poor had done her own heart good in its worst distress, and she desired to apply the same medicine to her beloved, who needed it: that was one thing; and then another was that she found her own anger rising when her mother left the room at that beloved knock; and to be angry with her poor widowed mother was a sin. "She is as unfortunate as I am happy," thought Julia; "I have got *mine* back."

Alfred assented to this arrangement with rather an ill grace. He misunderstood Julia, and thought she was sacrificing him to what he called her mother's injustice. This indeed was the interpretation any male would have

been pretty sure to put on it. His soreness, however, did not go very far, because she was so kind and good to him when they were together. He used to escort her back to the door of 66, and look imploringly, but she never asked him in. He thought her hard for this. He did not see the tears that flowed for that mute look of his the moment the door was closed, tears she innocently restrained for fear the sight of them should make *him* as unhappy as his imploring look made her. *Mauvais calcul!* She should have cried right out. When we men are unhappy, we like our sweethearts to be unhappier; that consoles *us*.

But when this had gone on nearly a month, and no change, Alfred lost patience; so he lingered one day at the door to make a request. He asked Julia to marry him, and so put an end to this state of things.

"Marry you, child?" cried Julia, blushing like a rose with surprise and pleasure. "Oh, for shame!"

After the first thrill, she appealed to his candor whether that would not be miserably selfish of her to leave her poor mother in her present distressed condition. "Ah, Alfred, *so* pale, *so* spiritless, and inconsolable! My poor, poor mother!"

"You will have to decide between us two one day."

"Heaven forbid!" said Julia, turning pale at the very idea. But he repeated doggedly that it must come to that, sooner or later. Then he reminded her of their solemn engagement, and put it to her whether it was a moral proceeding in her to go back from her plighted troth? What had he done to justify her in drawing back from her word? "I admit," said he, "that I have *suffered* plenty of wrong for your sake, but what have I done wrong?"

Undeterred by the fear of immorality, the monotonous

girl had but one reply to his multiform reasons: "This is no time for me to abandon my mother."

"Ah, it is her you love; you don't care for me," snapped Alfred.

"Don't I, dear Alfred?" murmured Julia.

"Forgive me! I'm a ruffian, a wretch."

"You are my Alfred. But oh, have a little patience, dear."

"A little patience? I have the patience of Job. But even his went at last."

(I ought to have said they were in the passage now. The encroaching youth had gained an entrance by agitating her so at the door that she had to ask him in to hide her own blushes from the public.) She now gently reminded him how much happier they were than they had been for months. "Dear me," said she, "I am almost happy, happier than I ought to be; could be quite so, but that I see you discontented."

"Ah, you have so many about you that you love; I have only you."

"And that is true, my poor Alfred."

This softened him a little; and then she interwove her fingers together, and so put both palms softly on his shoulder (you never saw a male do that, and never will), and implored him to be patient, to be generous. "Oh," said she, "if you knew the distress it gives me to refuse to you anything on earth, you would be generous, and not press me when my heart says 'Yes,' but my lips *must* say 'No.'"

This melted him altogether, and he said he would not torment her any more.

But he went away discontented with himself for having yielded: my lord did not call it "yielding," but "being defeated." And as he was not only very deep in love, but by nature combative, he took a lodging nearly

opposite No. 66, and made hot love to her, as hot as if the attachment was just forming. Her mother could not go out but he was at the door directly: she could not go out but he was at her heels. This pleased her at first and thrilled her with the sense of sweet and hot pursuit: but by and by, situated as she was between him and her mother, it worried her a little at times, and made her nervous. She spoke a little sharply to him now and then. And that was new. It came from the nerves, not the heart. At last she advised him to go back to Oxford. "I shall be the ruin of your mind if we go on like this," said she, sadly.

"What, leave the field to my rivals? No, thank you."

"What rivals, sir?" asked Julia, drawing up.

"Your mother, your brother, your curates that would come buzzing the moment I left; your sick people, who bask on your smiles and your sweet voice till I envy them: Sarah, whom you permit to brush your lovely hair; the piano you play on, the air you deign to breathe and brighten, everybody and everything that is near you; they are all my rivals; and shall I resign you to them, and leave myself desolate? I'm not such a fool."

She smiled, and could not help feeling it was sweet to be pestered. So she said with matronly dignity, and the old Julian consistency, "You are a foolish, impetuous boy. You are the plague of my life: and — the sun of my existence." That passed off charmingly. But presently his evil genius prompted Alfred to endeavor to soften Mrs. Dodd by letter, and induce her to consent to his marriage with her daughter.

He received her answer at breakfast-time. It was wonderfully polite and cold; Mrs. Dodd feigned unmixed surprise at the proposal, and said that insanity being unfortunately in her own family, and the suspicion of insanity resting on himself, such a union was not to be

thought of; and therefore, notwithstanding her respect for his many good qualities, she must decline with thanks the honor he offered her. She inserted a poisoned sting by way of postscript. "When you succeed in publicly removing the impression your own relations share with me, and when my husband owes his restoration to you, instead of his destruction, of course you will receive a very different answer to your proposal — should you then think it consistent with your dignity to renew it."

As hostile testators used to leave the disinherited one shilling, not out of a shilling's worth of kindly feeling, but that he might not be able to say his name was omitted through inadvertency, so Mrs. Dodd inserted this postscript merely to clinch the nail and tantalize her enemy. It was a masterpiece of feminine spite.

She would have been wonder-struck, could she have seen how Alfred received her missive.

To be sure he sat in a cold stupor of dejection for a good half-hour; but at the end of that time he lifted up his head, and said quietly, "So be it. I'll get the trial over, and my sanity established, as soon as possible: and then I'll hire a yacht and hunt her husband till I find him."

Having settled this little plan he looked out for Julia, whose sympathy he felt in need of after such a stern blow.

She came out much later than usual that day, for, to tell the truth, her mother had detained her to show her Alfred's letter, and her answer.

"Ah, mamma," said poor Julia, "you don't love me as you did once. Poor Alfred!"

Mrs. Dodd sighed at this reproach, but said she did not deserve it. No mother in her senses would consent to such a match.

Julia bowed her head submissively and went to her

duties. But when Alfred came to her open-mouthed to complain of her mother's cruelty, she stopped him at once, and asked him how he could go and write that foolish, unreasonable letter. Why had he not consulted her first? "You have subjected yourself to a rebuff," said she, angrily, "and one from which I should have saved you. Is it nothing that mamma out of pity to me connives at our meeting and spending hours together? Do you think she does no violence to her own wishes here? and is she to meet with no return?"

"What, are you against me too?" said poor Alfred.

"No, it is you who are our enemy with your unreasonable impatience."

"I am not so cold-blooded as you are, certainly."

"Humility and penitence would become you better than to retort on me; I love you both, and pray God on my knees to show me how to do my duty to both."

"That is it; you are not single-hearted like me. You want to please all the world, and reconcile the irreconcilable. It won't do: you will have to choose between your mother and me at last."

"Then of course I should choose my mother."

"Why?"

"Because she claims my duty as well as my love: because she is bowed down with sorrow, and needs her daughter just now more than you do; besides, you are my other self, and we must deny ourselves."

"We have no more right to be unjust to ourselves than to anybody else; injustice is injustice."

"Alfred, you are a high-minded heathen, and talk morality. Morality is a snare. What I pray to be is a Christian, as your dear sister was, and to deny myself; and you make it — oh, so difficult."

"So I suppose it will end in turning out your heathen

and then taking your curate. Your mother would consent to that directly."

"Alfred," said Julia with dignity, "these words are harsh, and — forgive me for saying so — they are coarse. Such words would separate us two, without my mother, if I were to hear many of them; for they take the bloom off affection, and that mutual reverence, without which no gentleman and lady could be blessed in holy wedlock."

Alfred was staggered and mortified too; they walked on in silence now.

"Alfred," said Julia at last, "do not think me behind you in affection, but wiser, for once, and our best friend. I do think we had better see less of one another for a time, my poor Alfred."

"And why for a time? why not forever?"

"If your heart draws no distinction, why not indeed?"

"So be it, then; for I will be no woman's slave. There's my hand, Julia; let us part friends."

"Thank you for that, dear Alfred; may you find some one who can love you more — than — I do."

The words choked her. But he was stronger, because he was in a passion. He reproached her bitterly. "If I had been as weak and inconstant as you are, I might have been out of Drayton House long before I did escape. But I was faithful to my one love. I have some right to sing 'Aileen Aroon,' you have none. You are an angel of beauty and goodness; you will go to heaven, and I shall go to the Devil now for want of you; but then you have no constancy nor true fidelity; so that has parted us, and now nothing is left me but to try and hate you."

He turned furiously on his heel.

"God bless you, go where you will," faltered Julia.

He replied with a fierce ejaculation of despair, and dashed away.

Thus temper and misunderstanding triumphed, after so many strange and bitter trials had failed.

But alas! it is often so.

CHAPTER XVII.

Both the parted lovers were wretched. Julia never complained, but drooped, and read the Psalms, and Edward detected her in tears over them. He questioned her, and obtained a lame account; she being far more bent on screening Alfred than on telling the truth.

Edward called on the other, and found him disconsolate, and reading a heathen philosopher for comfort, and finding none. Edward questioned him, and he was reserved and even sulky. Sir Imperturbable persisted quietly, and he exploded, and out came his wrongs. Edward replied that he was a pretty fellow; wanted it all his own way. "Suppose my mother, with her present feelings, was to take a leaf out of your book, and use all her power; where would you be then? Come, old fellow, I know what love is, and one of us *shall* have the girl he loves, unless any harm should come to my poor father owing to your blunder — oh, that would put it out of the question, I feel — but let us hope better. I pulled you out of the fire, and somehow I seem to like you better than ever after that; let me pull you out of this mess too."

"Pull away," cried the impetuous youth. "I'll trust you with my life; ay, with more than my life, with my love; for you are the man for me; reason is always uppermost with you: —

> Give me the man that is not passion's slave,
> And I will wear him in my heart's core, ay" —

"Oh, bother that! If you are in earnest, don't mouth, but put on your hat and come over."

He assented; but in the middle of putting on his coat, made this little observation: "Now I see how wise the ancients were; yes, friendship is better than love; calmer, more constant, free from the heats and chills of that impetuous passion; its pure bosom is ruffled by none of love's jealousies and irritabilities. *Solem e mundo tollunt qui tollunt amicitiam.*"

"Oh, bother quoting; come and shake hands with Julia." They went over; Mrs. Dodd was in the City. Edward ushered in Alfred, saying, "Here is the other impetuosity;" and sagely retired for a few minutes; when he came back they were sitting hand in hand, he gazing on her, she inspecting the carpet. "That is all right," said Edward, dryly; "now the next thing is, you must go back to Oxford directly, and read for your first class."

The proposal fell like a blight upon the reconciled lovers. But Edward gave potent reasons. The delays of law were endless; Alfred's defendant had already obtained one postponement of the trial on frivolous grounds. Now the Oxford examination and Doncaster races come on at a fixed date, by a law of nature, and admit of no "postponement swindle." "You mark my words, you will get your class before you will get your trial, and it won't hurt you to go into court a first-class man; will it? And then you won't quarrel by letter, you two, I know. Come, will you do what I tell you, or is friendship but a name? eh, Mr. Bombast?" He ended with great though quiet force: "Come, you two, which is better, to part like the scissors, or part like the thread?"

Similes are no arguments; that is why they convince people so; Alfred capitulated to the scissors and thread; and only asked with abnormal humility to be allowed

to taste the joys of reconciliation for two days; the third found him at Oxford; he called on the head of his college to explain what had prevented his return to Exeter in the October term twelve months ago, and asked for rooms. Instead of siding with a man of his own college so cruelly injured, the dignitary was alarmed by the bare accusation, and said he must consider; insanity was a terrible thing.

"So is false accusation, and so is false imprisonment," said Hardie, bitterly.

"Unquestionably. But I have at present no means of deciding how far those words apply." In short, he could give no answer; must consult the other officers, and would convey the result by letter.

Alfred's pride was deeply mortified, not less by a certain cold, repugnant manner, than by the words. And there came over his heart a sickening feeling that he was now in the eyes of men an intellectual leper.

He went to another college directly, and applied to the vice-president; the vice-president sent him with a letter to the dean; the dean looked frightened, and told him hesitatingly the college was full; he might put his name down, and perhaps get in next year. Alfred retired, and learned from the porter that the college was not full. He sighed deeply, and the sickening feeling grew on him; an ineradicable stigma seemed upon him; and Mrs. Dodd was no worse than the rest of the world then; every mother in England would approve her resolution. He wandered about the scenes of his intellectual triumphs; he stood in the great square of the schools, a place ugly to unprejudiced eyes, but withal somewhat grand and inspiring, especially to scholars who have fought their keen and bloodless battles there. He looked at the windows and gilt inscription of the *schola metaphysices* in which he had met the scholars of his

day and defeated them for the Ireland. He wandered into the theatre, and eyed the rostrum, whence he had not mumbled, but recited, his Latin prize poem with more than one thunder of academic applause; thunder compared with which Drury Lane's is a mere cracker. These places were unchanged; but he, sad scholar, wandered among them as if he was a ghost, and all these were stony phantoms of an intellectual past, never, never to return.

He telegraphed Sampson and Edward to furnish him with certificates that he had never been insane, but the victim of a foul conspiracy; and, when he received them, he went with them to St. Margaret's Hall; for he had bethought him that the new principal was a first-rate man, and had openly vowed he would raise that "refuge for the oft-times ploughed" to a place of learning.

Hardie called, sent in his card, and was admitted to the principal's study. He was about to explain who he was, when the doctor interrupted him, and told him politely he knew him by reputation. "Tell me rather," said he, shrewdly, "to what I owe this application from an undergraduate so distinguished as Mr. Hardie?"

Then Alfred began to quake, and, instead of replying, put a hand suddenly before his face, and lost courage for one moment.

"Come, Mr. Hardie," said the principal, "don't be disconcerted: a fault regretted is half atoned; and I am not disposed to be hard on the errors of youth; I mean, where there is merit to balance them."

"Sir," said Alfred, sadly, "it is not a fault I have to acknowledge, but a misfortune."

"Tell me all about it," said Dr. Alder, guardedly.

He told it, omitting nothing essential that could touch the heart or excite the ironical humor of an academician.

"Well, 'truth is more wonderful than fiction,'" said the doctor. And I conclude the readers of this tale are all of the doctor's opinion; so sweet to the mind is cant.

Alfred offered his certificates.

Now Dr. Alder had been asking himself in what phrases he should decline this young genius, who was sane now, but of course had been mad, only had forgotten the circumstance. But the temptation to get an Ireland scholar into his Hall suddenly overpowered him. The probability that he might get a first-class in a lucid interval was too enticing; nothing venture, nothing have. He determined to venture a good deal.

"Mr. Hardie," said he, "this house shall always be open to good morals and good scholarship while I preside over it, and it shall be open to them all the more when they come to me dignified, and made sacred, by 'unmerited calamity.'"

Now this fine speech, like Minerva herself, came from the head. Alfred was overcome by it to tears. At that the doctor's heart was touched, and even began to fancy it had originated that noble speech.

It was no use doing things by halves; so Dr. Alder gave Alfred a delightful set of rooms, and made the Hall pleasant to him. He was rewarded by a growing conviction that he had made an excellent acquisition. This opinion, however, was anything but universal; and Alfred, finding the men of his own college suspected his sanity, and passed jokes behind his back, cut them all dead, and confined himself to his little Hall. There they petted him, and crowed about him, and betted on him for the schools as freely as if he was a colt the Hall was going to enter for the Derby.

He read hard and judiciously, but without his old confidence; he became anxious and doubtful; he had seen so many first-rate men just miss a first-class. The bril-

liant creature analyzed all his Aristotelian treatises, and wrote the synopses clear with marginal references on great pasteboard cards three feet by two, and so kept the whole subject before his eye, till he obtained a singular mastery. Same system with the historians; nor did he disdain the use of colored inks. Then the brilliant creature drew lists of all the hard words he encountered in his reading, especially in the common books, and read these lists till mastered. The stake was singularly heavy in his case, so he guarded every crevice.

And at this period he was not so unhappy as he expected. The laborious days went swiftly, and twice a week at least came a letter from Julia. Oh, how his grave academic room, with oaken panels, did brighten, when her letter lay on the table. It was opened, and seemed written with sunbeams. No quarrels on paper! Absence made the heart grow fonder. And Edward came to see him, and over their wine let out a feminine trait in Julia. "When Hurd calls she walks out of the room, just as my poor mother does when you come. That is spite: since you are sent away nobody else is to profit by it. Where is her Christianity, eh? and echo answers — got a cigar, old fellow?" And, after puffing in silence awhile, he said, resignedly, "I am an unnatural monster."

"Oh, are you?" said the other, serenely, for he was also under the benign influence.

"Yes," said Edward, "I am your ally, and a mere spy in the camp of those two ladies. I watch all their moves for your sake."

Alfred forgave him. And thus his whole life was changed, and for nearly twelve months (for Dr. Alder let him reside in the Hall through the vacation) he pursued the quiet tenor of a student's life, interrupted at times by law; but that is another topic.

WIFE AND NO WIFE.

Mrs. Dodd was visibly shaken by that calamity which made her shrink with horror from the sight of Alfred Hardie. In the winter she was so unwell that she gave up her duties with Messrs. Cross and Co. Her connection with them had been creditable to both parties. I believe I forgot to say why they trusted her so; well, I must tell it elsewhere. David off her hands, she was independent, and had lost the motive and the heart for severe work. She told the partners she could no longer do them justice, and left them, to their regret. They then advised her to set up as a milliner, and offered her credit for goods at cash prices up to two thousand pounds: she thanked them like a sorrowful queen, and went her way.

In the spring she recovered some spirit and health; but at midsummer a great and subtle misfortune befell her. Her mind was bent on David night and day, and used to struggle to evade the laws of space that bind its grosser companion, and find her lost husband on the sea. She often dreamed of him, but vaguely. But one fatal night she had a dream as clear as daylight, and sharp as white pebbles in the sun. She was on a large ship with guns; she saw men bring a dead sailor up the side; she saw all their faces, and the dead man's too. It was David. His face was white. A clear voice said he was to be buried in the deep next morning. She saw the deck at her feet, the breeches of the guns, so clear, so defined, that when she awoke, and found herself in the dark, she thought reality was the illusion. She told the dream to Julia and Edward. They tried to encourage her, in vain. "I saw him," she said, "I saw him; it was a vision, not a dream; my David is dead. Well, then, I shall not be long behind him."

Dr. Sampson ridiculed her dream to her face. But to her children he told another story. "I am anxious about her," he said, "most anxious. There is no mortal ill the distempered brain may not cause. Is it not devilish we can hear nothing of him? She will fret herself into the grave, as sure as fate, if something does not turn up."

Her children could not console her; they tried, but something hung round their own hearts, and chilled every effort. In a word, they shared her fears. How came she to see him on board a ship with guns? In her waking hours she always said he was on a merchant ship. Was it not one of those visions, which come to mortals and give them sometimes a peep into space, and, far more rarely, a glance into time?

One day in the autumn, Alfred, being in town on law business, met what seemed the ghost of Mrs. Dodd in the streets. She saw him not; her eye was on that ghastly face she had seen in her dreams. It flashed through his mind that she would not live long to part him and Julia. But he discouraged the ungenerous thought; almost forgave her repugnance to himself, and felt it would be worse than useless to ask Julia to leave her mother, who was leaving her visibly.

But her horror of him was anything but softened, and she used to tell Dr. Sampson she thought the sight of that man would kill her now. Edward himself began to hope Alfred would turn his affections elsewhere. The house in Pembroke Street was truly the house of mourning now; all their calamities were light compared with this.

THE DISTRICT VISITOR.

While Julia was writing letters to keep up Alfred's heart, she was very sad herself. Moreover, he had left her for Oxford but a very few days, when she received an

anonymous letter, her first. It was written in a female hand, and couched in friendly and sympathetic terms. The writer thought it only fair to warn her that Mr. Alfred Hardie was passionately fond of a lady in the asylum, and had offered her marriage. If Miss Dodd wished to be deceived, let her burn this letter and think no more of it; if not, let her insert this advertisement in the *Times:* "The whole Truth. — L. D.," and her correspondent would communicate particulars by word or writing.

What a barbed and poisoned arrow is to the body, was this letter to Julia's mind. She sat cold as a stone with this poison in her hand. Then came an impetuous impulse to send it down to Alfred, and request him to transfer the other half of his heart to his lady of the asylum. Then she paused, and remembered how much unjust suspicion had been levelled at him already. What right had she to insult him? She would try and keep the letter to herself. As to acting upon it, her good-sense speedily suggested it came from the rival in question, real or supposed. "She wants to make use of me," said Julia; "it is plain Alfred does not care much for her, or why does she come to me?" She put the letter in her desk, and it rankled in her heart. *Hæret lateri lethalis arundo.* She trembled at herself; she felt a savage passion had been touched in her. She prayed day and night against jealousy.

But I must now, to justify my heading, skip some months, and relate a remarkable incident that befell her in the said character. On the first of August in this year, a good Christian woman, one of her patients, asked her to call on Mr. Barkington, that lodged above. "He is a decent body, miss, and between you and me, I think his complaint is, he don't get quite enough to eat."

"Barkington!" said Julia, and put her hand to her bosom. She went and tapped at his door.

"Come in," said a shrillish voice.

She entered, and found a weazened old man seated, mending his own coat.

He rose, and she told him she was a district visitor. He said he had heard of her; they called her the beautiful lady in that court. This was news to her, and made her blush. She asked leave to read a chapter to him; he listened as to some gentle memory of childhood. She prescribed him a glass of port wine, and dispensed it on the instant. Thus physicked, her patient became communicative, and chattered on about his native place — but did not name it — and talked about the people there. Now our district visitor was, if the truth must be told, a compounder. She would permit her pupils to talk about earthly affairs, on condition they would listen to heavenly ones before she went. So she let this old man run on, and he told her he had been a banker's clerk all his life, and saved a thousand pounds, and come up to London to make his fortune on the Stock Exchange; and there he was sometimes a bull, and sometimes a bear, and whichever he was, certain foxes called brokers and jobbers got the profit and he the loss. "It's all the same as a gambling-table," said he. "The jobbers and brokers have got the same odds the bank has at Rouge et Noir, and the little capitalist like me is doomed beforehand." Then he told her that there was a crossing-sweeper near the Exchange who came from his native place, and had started as a speculator, and come down to that, only he called it rising, and used to speak with a shudder of when he dabbled in the funds, and often told him to look sharp, and get a crossing. And lo! one day when he was cleaned out, and desperate, and hovering with the other ghosts of little capitalists about the tomb of their money, he saw his countryman fall flat, and the broom fly out of his hand. Instantly he made

a rush, and so did a wooden-legged sailor; but he got first to the broom, and began to sweep while others picked up his countryman, who proved dead as a herring; and he succeeded to his broom, and it made money by the Exchange, though he never could: still, one day he picked up a pocket-book in that neighborhood, with a lump of money, which he straightway advertised in — no newspapers. And now Julia thought it time to interpose the eighth commandment, the golden rule, and such branches of learning.

He became a favorite of hers; he had so much to say. She even thought she had seen his face before, but she could not tell where. She gave him good books and tracts, and read to him, and ploughed his heart with her sweet voice, and sowed the good seed in the furrows, — seed which, like wheat or other grain, often seems to fall flat and die, but comes out green after many days.

One Saturday she invited him to dine with the servants next day. He came during church-time, and went away in the afternoon while she was with her mother. But she asked Sarah, who proved eager to talk about him. "He was a rum customer; kep asking questions all dinner-time. 'Well,' says I, 'you're good company, you are: be you a lawyer, for you examines us; but you don't tell us nothing.' Ye see, miss, Jane she is that simple, she was telling him everything, and about Mr. Alfred's lawsuit with his father, and all."

Julia said that was indiscreet, but after all what did it matter?

"Who knows, miss?" Sarah replied; "least said is soonest mended. If you please, miss, who is he? Where does he bide? Where does he come from? Does he know Hardies?"

"I should think not. Why?"

"Because I'm much mistaken if he doesn't." Then

putting on a stolid look, she asked, "Does he know your papa?"

"Oh no, Sarah. How should he?"

"There now," said Sarah; "miss, you are all in the dark about this old man. I'll tell you something; I took him out of the way of Jane's temper when she began a-dishing up, and I had him into the parlor a minute, and in course there he sees the picture of your poor papa hung up. Miss, if you'll believe me, the moment he claps eyes on that there picture, he halloos out, and out goes his two hands like this here. 'It's him!' says he, 'it's him!' and stares at the picture like a stuck pig. Forgot I was close behind him, I do believe. 'She's *his* daughter,' says he, in a whisper, a curious whisper; seemed to come out of his stomach. 'What's the matter, now?' says I, just so. He gave a great start, as if my speaking had wakened him from a dream, and says he, 'Nothing,' as quiet as a lamb. 'Nothing isn't much,' says I, just so. 'It usedn't to be anything at all when I was your age,' says he, sneerin'. But I paid him in good coin; says I, 'Old man, where you comes from do the folks use to start and halloo out and cry, "It's him! she's his daughter!" and fling their two arms abroad like a windmill in March, and all for—nothing?' So at that he changed as white as my smock, and fell all of a tremble. However, at dinner he perks up, and drew that poor simple Jane out a good one. But he didn't look towards me much, which I set opposite to watch my lord."

"Sarah," said Julia, "this is really curious, mysterious; you are a good, watchful, faithful girl; and, to tell the truth, I sometimes fancy I have seen Mr. Barkington's face. However, I will solve this little mystery to-morrow, for I will ask him; thank you, Sarah."

On Monday she called on Mr. Barkington to solve the

mystery. But, instead of solving, her visit thickened it, for Mr. Barkington was gone bag and baggage. When Edward was told of this business, he thought it remarkable, and regretted he had not seen the old man.

So do I; for it is my belief Edward would have recognized him.

DAVID DODD.

The history of a man is the history of his mind. And that is why you have heard so little of late about the simplest, noblest, and most unfortunate of all my personages. Insanity is as various as eccentricity; I have spared the kind-hearted reader some of David's vagaries; however, when we parted with him, he had settled into that strange phase of lunacy, in which the distant past seems nearly obliterated, and memory exists, but revolves in a narrow round of things present; this was accompanied with a positive illusion: to wit, a fixed idea that he was an able seaman; and, as usual, what mental power he retained came out strongest in support of this idea. All this was marked by a bodily agility somewhat more than natural in a man of his age. Owing to the wind astern, he was enabled to run into Portsmouth before the steam-tug came up with him; and he did run into port, not because he feared pursuit, but because he was desperately hungry; and he had no suicidal tendencies whatever.

He made for a public-house, and called for some bread and cheese and beer; they were supplied, and then, lo! he had no money to pay for them. "I'll owe you till I come back from sea, my bo'," said he, coolly. On this the landlord collared him, and David shook him off into the road, much as a terrier throws a rat from him; then there was a row, and a naval officer, who was cruising about for hands, came up and heard it. There was noth-

ing at all unseamanlike in David's conduct, and the gentleman took a favorable view of it, and paid the small demand, but not with unleavened motives. He was the second lieutenant of H. M. frigate Vulture; she had a bad name, thanks to her last captain, and was short of hands. He took David aside and asked him would he like to ship on board the Vulture.

David said yes, and suggested the foretop. "Oh, yes," growled the lieutenant, "you all want to be there." He then gauged this Jacky Tar's intellects: asked him *inter alia* how to send a frigate's foretop gallant-yard down upon deck: and to show how seamanship sticks in the brain when once it gets there, David actually told him. "You are rather old," said the lieutenant, "but you are a seaman," and so took him on board the Vulture at Spithead, before Green began to search the town in earnest. Nobody acts his part better than some demented persons do; and David made a very tolerable sailor, notwithstanding his forty-five years, and the sea did him good within certain limits. Between him and the past lay some intellectual or cerebral barrier as impenetrable as the great wall of China; but on the hither side of that wall his faculties improved. Of course the crew soon found out the gap in his poor brain, and called him Soft Billy, and played on him at first. But by degrees he won their affection; he was so wonderfully sweet-tempered: and besides, his mind being in an abnormal state, he loathed grog, and gave his allowance to his messmates. One day he showed an unexpected trait; they were lying becalmed in southern latitudes, and, time hanging heavy, each whiled it how he might. One fiddled, another wrote to his Polly, another fished for sharks, another whistled for a wind, scores fell into the form of meditation without a reality, and one got a piece of yarn and amused himself killing flies on the bulwark.

Now this shocked poor Billy; he put out his long arm and intercepted a stroke. "What is the row?" said the operator.

"You mustn't," said Billy, solemnly, looking into his face with great dreamy eyes.

"You be ——," said the other, and lent him a tap on the cheek with the yarn. Billy did not seem to mind this; his skin had little sensibility, owing to his disorder.

Jack recommenced on his flies, and the bystanders laughed. They always laughed now at everything Billy said, as society used to laugh when the late Theodore Hook asked for the mustard at dinner; and would have laughed if he had said, "You see me sad; I have just lost my poor father."

David stood looking on at the slaughter with a helpless, puzzled air.

At last he seemed to have an idea; he caught Jack up by the throat and knee, lifted him with gigantic strength above his head, and was just going to hurl him shrieking into the sea, when a dozen strong hands interfered, and saved the man. Then they were going to bind Billy hand and foot; but he was discovered to be perfectly calm; so they remonstrated instead, and presently Billy's commander-in-chief, a ship-boy called Georgie White, shoved in and asked him in a shrill, haughty voice how he dared do that. "My dear," said Billy, with great humility and placidity, "he was killing God's creatures, no allowance;[1] so, ye see, to save their lives, I was *obliged*."

At this piece of reasoning, and the simplicity and gentle conviction with which it was delivered, there was a roar. It subsided, and a doubt arose whether Billy was altogether in the wrong.

[1] Nautical phrase, meaning without stint or limit, or niggardly admeasurement as there is of grog.

"Well," said one, "I dare say life is sweet to them little creatures, if they could speak their minds."

"I've known a ship founder in a fair breeze all along of killing 'em," said one old salt.

Finally, several sided with Billy, and intimated that "it served the lubber right for not listening to *reason*." And, indeed, methinks it was lovely and touching that so divine a ray of goodness and superior reason should have shot from his heart or from Heaven across that poor benighted brain.

But it must be owned his mode of showing his humanity was somewhat excessive and abnormal, and smacked of lunacy. After this, however, the affection of his messmates was not so contemptuous.

Now the captain of the Vulture was Billy's cousin by marriage, Reginald Bazalgette. Twenty years ago, when the captain was a boy, they were great friends; of late Bazalgette had seen less of him; still it seems strange he did not recognize him in his own ship. But one or two causes co-operated to prevent that. In the first place the mind when turned in one direction is not so sharp in another; and Captain Bazalgette had been told to look for David in a merchant ship bound for the East Indies. In the next place insanity alters the expression of the face wonderfully, and the captain of a frigate runs his eye over four hundred sailors at muster, or a hundred at work, not to examine their features, but their dress and bearing at the one, and their handiness at the other. The worst piece of luck was that Mrs. Dodd did not know David called himself William Thompson. So there stood "William Thompson" large as life on the ship's books, and nobody the wiser. Captain Bazalgette had a warm regard and affection for Mrs. Dodd, and did all he could. Indeed, he took great liberties; he stopped and overhauled several merchant ships for the truant;

and, by-the-by, on one occasion William Thompson was one of the boat's crew that rowed a midshipman from the Vulture alongside a merchant ship to search for David Dodd; he heard the name and circumstance mentioned in the boat, but the very name was new to him. He remembered it, but only from that hour; and told his loving tyrant, Georgie White, they had been overhauling a merchant ship and looking for one David Dodd.

It was about midsummer the Vulture anchored off one of the South Sea islands, and sent a boat ashore for fruit. Billy and his dearly beloved little tyrant, Georgie White, were among the crew. Off goes Georgie to bathe, and Billy sits down on the beach with a loving eye upon him. The water was calm; but the boy with the heedlessness of youth stayed in it nearly an hour; he was seized with cramp and screamed to his comrades. They ran, but they were half a mile from the boat. Billy dashed into the water, and came up with Georgie just as he was sinking for the last time; the boy gripped him; but by his great strength he disentangled himself and got Georgie on his shoulders, and swam for the shore. Meantime the sailors got into the boat, and rowed hastily towards them.

Now Billy was undermost and his head under water at times, and Georgie, some thought, had helped strangle him by gripping his neck with both arms. Anyway, by the boy's account, just as they were getting into shallow water, Billy gave a great shriek and turned over on his back; and Georgie paddled with his hands, but Billy soon after this sunk like a dead body while the boat was yet fifty yards off. And Georgie screamed and pointed to the place, and the boat came up and took Georgie in, and the water was so clear that the sailors saw Billy lie motionless at the bottom, and hooked him with a boat-hook and drew him up; but his face came up alongside

a deadly white, with staring eyes, and they shuddered and feared it was too late.

They took him into a house, and stripped him, and rubbed him, and wrapped him in blankets, and put him by the hot fire. But all would not do.

Then, having dried his clothes, they dressed the body again and laid him in the boat, and cast the Union Jack over him, and rowed slowly and unwillingly back to the ship, Georgie sobbing and screaming over the body, and not a dry eye in the boat.

The body was carried up the side, and uncovered, just as Mrs. Dodd saw in her dream. The surgeon was sent for and examined the body; and then the grim routine of a man-of-war dealt swiftly with the poor skipper. He was carried below to be prepared for a sailor's grave. Then the surgeon walked aft and reported formally to the officer of the watch the death by drowning of William Thompson. The officer of the watch went instantly to the captain in his cabin and reported the death. The captain gave the stereotyped order to bury him at noon next day; and the body was stripped that night and sewed up in his hammock with a portion of his clothes and bedding to conceal the outline of the corpse, and two cannon-balls at his feet; and so the poor skipper was laid out for a watery grave, and covered by the Union Jack.

I don't know whether any of my amorous young readers are much affected by the catastrophe I have just related. If not, I will just remind them that even Edward Dodd was prepared to oppose the marriage of Julia and Alfred, if any serious ill should befall his father at sea, owing to Alfred's imprudent interference in rescuing him from Drayton House.

CHAPTER XVIII.

LAW.

MINUTE study of my fellow-creatures has revealed to me that there are many intelligent persons who think that a suit at law commences in court. This is not so. Many suits are fought and decided by the special pleaders, and so never come into court; and, as a stiff encounter of this kind actually took place in Hardie *vs.* Hardie, a word of prefatory explanation may be proper. Suitors come into court only to try an issue; an issue is a mutual lie direct; and towards this both parties are driven upon paper by the laws of pleading, which may be thus summed: 1. Every statement of the adversary must either be contradicted flat, or confessed and avoided; "avoided" means neutralized by fresh matter. 2. Nothing must be advanced by plaintiff which does not disclose a ground of action at law. 3. Nothing advanced by defendant, which, if true, would not be a defence to the action. These rules exclude in a vast degree the pitiable defects and vices that mark all the unprofessional arguments one ever hears; for on a breach of any one of the said rules the other party can demur; the demurrer is argued before the judges in Banco, and, if successfully, the faulty plaint or faulty plea is dismissed, and often of course the cause won or lost thereby, and the country saved the trouble, and the suitors the expense, of trying an issue.

So the writ being served by plaintiff's attorney, and an appearance put in by defendant's, the paper battle began by Alfred Hardie, through his attorney, serving on

defendant's attorney "THE DECLARATION." This was drawn by his junior counsel, Garrow, and ran thus, after specifying the court and the date: —

Middlesex to wit. Alfred Hardie by John Compton his attorney sues Thomas Hardie for that the Deft. assaulted Plt. gave him into custody to a certain person and caused him to be imprisoned for a long space of time in a certain place to wit a Lunatic Asylum whereby the Plt. was much inconvenienced and suffered much anguish and pain in mind and body and was unable to attend to his affairs and was injured in his credit and circumstances.

And the Plt. claims £5000.

Mr. Compton conveyed a copy of this to Alfred, and said it was a sweet "declaration." "What," said Alfred, "is that all I have suffered at these miscreants' hands? Why, it is written with an icicle."

Mr. Compton explained that this was the outline; "Counsel will lay the colors on in court as thick as you like."

The defendant replied to the above declaration by three pleas.

By statute 8 & 9 Vic., c. 100, s. 105.

1. The Deft. by Joseph Heathfield his attorney says he is not guilty.

2. And for a further plea the Deft. says that before and at the time of the alleged imprisonment Plt. was a person of unsound mind and incompetent to take care of himself and a proper person to be taken care of and detained and it was unfit unsafe improper and dangerous that he should be at large thereupon the Deft. being the uncle of the Plt. and a proper person to cause the Plt. to be taken charge of under due care and treatment in that behalf did cause the Plt. to be so taken charge of and detained under due care and treatment, etc.

The third plea was the stinger, but too long to cite *verbatim;* it went to this tune, that the plaintiff, at and before the time, etc., had conducted himself like a person of unsound mind, etc., and two certificates that he was insane had been given by two persons duly authorized under the statute to sign such certificates, and the defendant had believed and did *bonâ fide* believe these certificates to be true, etc.

The first of these pleas was a mere formal plea, under the statute.

The second raised the very issue at common law the plaintiff wished to try.

The third made John Compton knit his brows with perplexity. "This is a very nasty plea," said he to Alfred; "a regular trap. If we join issue on it we must be defeated; for how can we deny the certificates were in form; and yet the plaguy thing is not loose enough to be demurred to? Colls, who drew these pleas for them?"

"Mr. Colvin, sir."

"Make a note to employ him in our next stiff pleading."

Alfred was staggered. He had thought to ride roughshod over defendant; a common expectation of plaintiffs: but seldom realized. Lawyers fight hard. The pleas were taken to Garrow; he said there was but one course, to demur to No. 3. So the plaintiff "joined issue on all the defendant's pleas, and as to the last plea the plaintiff said the same was bad in substance." Defendant rejoined that the same was good in substance, and thus Hardie *vs.* Hardie divided itself into two cases, a question of law for the judges, and an issue for the mixed tribunal loosely called a jury. And I need hardly say that should the defendant win either of them, he would gain the cause.

Postponing the history of the legal *question*, I shall show how Messrs. Heathfield fought off the *issue*, and cooled the ardent Alfred and sickened him of law.

In theory every Englishman has a right to be tried by his peers: but in fact there are five gentlemen in every court, each of whom has by precedent the power to refuse him a jury, by simply postponing the trial term after term, until the death of one of the parties, when the action, if a personal one, dies too: and, by a singular anomaly of judicial practice, if a slippery defendant can't persuade A or B, judges of the common law court, to connive at what I venture to call

THE POSTPONEMENT SWINDLE,

he can actually go to C, D, and E, one after another, with his rejected application, and the previous refusal of the other judges to delay and baffle justice goes for little or nothing; so that the postponing swindler has five to one in his favor.

Messrs. Heathfield began this game unluckily. They applied to a judge in chambers for a month to plead. Mr. Compton opposed in person, and showed that this was absurd. The judge allowed them only four days to plead. Issue being joined, Mr. Compton pushed on for trial, and the cause was set down for the November term. Towards the end of the term Messrs. Heathfield applied to one of the *puisné* judges for a postponement, on the ground that a principal witness could not attend. Application was supported by the attorney's affidavit to the effect that Mr. Speers was in Boulogne and had written to him to say that he had met with a railway accident, and feared he could not possibly come to England in less than a month. A respectable French doctor confirmed this by certificate. Compton opposed, but the judge would hardly hear him, and postponed the trial as

a matter of course: this carried it over the sittings into next term. Alfred groaned, but bore it patiently; not so Dr. Sampson: he raged against secret tribunals: "See how men deteriorate the moment they get out of the full light of publeecity. What English judge, sitting in the light of Shorthand, would admit 'Jack swears that Gill says' for legal evidence? Speers has sworn to no facks. Heathfield has sworn to no facks but th' existence of Speers's hearsay. They are a couple o' lyres. I'll bet ye ten pounds t' a shilling Speers is as well as I'm."

Mr. Compton quietly reminded him there was a direct statement — the French doctor's certificate.

"A medical certificut!" shrieked Sampson, amazed. "Mai — dearr — sirr, a medical certificut is just an article o' commerce — like an attorney's conscience. Gimme a guinea and I'll get *you* sworn sick, diseased, disabled, or dead this minute, whichever you like best."

"Come, doctor, don't fly off: you said you'd bet ten pounds to a shilling Speers is not an invalid at all. I say done."

"Done."

"How will you find out?"

"How? Why, set the thief-takers on um, to be sure."

He wrote off to the prefect of police at Boulogne, and in four days received an answer headed "Information in the interest of families." The prefect informed him there had been no railway accident: but that the Sieur Speers, English subject, had really hurt his leg getting out of a railway carriage six weeks ago, and had kept his room some days; but he had been cured some weeks, and going about his business, and made an excursion to Paris.

On this Compton offered Sampson the shilling. But

he declined to take it. "The lie was self-evident," said he; "and here's a judge wouldn't see't, and an attorney couldn't. Been all their lives sifting evidence too. Oh, the darkness of the profissional mind!"

The next term came. Mr. Compton delivered the briefs and fees, subpœnaed the witnesses, etc., and Alfred came up with a good heart to get his stigma removed by twelve honest men in the light of day: but first one case was taken out of its order and put before him, then another, till term wore near an end. Then Messrs. Heathfield applied to another judge of the court for a postponement. Mr. Richard Hardie, plaintiff's father, a most essential witness, was ill at Clare Court. Medical certificate and letter herewith.

Compton opposed. Now this judge was a keen and honorable lawyer, with a lofty hatred of all professional tricks. He heard the two attorneys, and delivered himself to this effect, only of course in better legal phrase: "I shall make no order. The defendant has been here before on a doubtful affidavit. You know, Mr. Heathfield, juries in these cases go by the plaintiff's evidence, and his conduct under cross-examination. And I think it would not be just nor humane to keep this plaintiff in suspense, and *civiliter mortuum*, any longer. You can take out a commission to examine Richard Hardie."

To this Mr. Compton nailed him, but the commission took time; and while it was pending, Mr. Heathfield went to another judge with another disabled witness: Peggy Black. That naïve personage was nursing her deceased sister's children — in an affida it: and they had scarlatina — surgeon's certificate to that effect. Compton opposed, and pointed out the blot. "You don't want the children in the witn ss-box," said he: "and we are not to be robbed of our trial because one

of your witnesses prefers nursing other people's children to facing the witness-box."

The judge nodded assent. "I make no order," said he.

Mr. Heathfield went out from his presence and sent a message by telegraph to Peggy Black. "You must have scar. yourself, and telegraph the same at once: certificate by post."

The accommodating maiden telegraphed back that she had unfortunately taken scarlatina of the children: medical certificate to follow by post. Four judges out of the five were now awake to the move. But Mr. Heathfield tinkered the hole in his late affidavit with Peggy's telegram, and slipped down to Westminster to the chief judge of the court, who had had no opportunity of watching the growth and dissemination of disease among defendant's witnesses. Compton fought this time by counsel and with a powerful affidavit. But luck was against him. The judge had risen to go home: he listened standing; Compton's counsel was feeble; did not feel the wrong: how could he? lawyers fatten by delays of justice, as physicians do by tardy cure. The postponement was granted.

Alfred cursed them all, and his own folly in believing that an alleged lunatic would be allowed fair play at Westminster, or anywhere else. Compton took snuff, and Sampson appealed to the press again. He wrote a long letter, exposing with fearless irony the postponement swindle as it had been worked in Hardie *vs.* Hardie: and wound up with this fiery peroration: —

"This Englishman sues not merely for damages, but to recover lost rights dearer far than money, of which he says he has been unjustly robbed; his right to walk in daylight on the soil of his native land without being seized, and tied up for life like a nigger or a dog; his

footing in society; a chance to earn his bread; and a place among mankind: ay, among mankind; for a lunatic is an animal in the law's eye and society's, and an alleged lunatic is a lunatic till a jury clears him.

"I appeal to you, gentlemen, is not such a suitor sacred in all wise and good men's minds? Is he not defendant as well as plaintiff? Why, his stake is enormous compared with the nominal defendant's; and, if I know right from wrong, to postpone his trial a fourth time would be to insult Divine justice, and trifle with human misery, and shock the common-sense of nations."

The doctor's pen neither clipped the words nor minced the matter, you see. Reading this the water came into Alfred's eyes: "Ah, stanch friend," he said, "how few are like you! To the intellectual dwarfs who conspire with my oppressors, Hardie *vs.* Hardie is but a family squabble. *Parvis omnia parva.*" Mr. Compton read it too; and said from the bottom of his heart, "Heaven defend us from our friends! This is enough to make the courts decline to try the case at all."

And, indeed, it did not cure the evil: for next term another *malade affidavitaire* was set up. Speers to wit. This gentleman deposed to having come over on purpose to attend the trial; but, having inadvertently stepped aside as far as *Wales*, he lay there stricken with a mysterious malady, and had just strength to forward medical certificate. On this the judge, in spite of remonstrance, adjourned Hardie *vs.* Hardie to the summer term. Summer came, the evil day drew nigh: Mr. Heathfield got the venue changed from Westminster to London, which was the fifth postponement. At last the cause came on: the parties and witnesses were all in court, with two whole days before them to try it in.

Dr. Sampson rushed in furious. "There is some deviltry afloat," said he. "I was in the House of

Commons last night, and there I saw the defendant's counsel earwigging the judge."

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Compton, "such suspicions are ridiculous. Do you think they can talk of nothing but Hardie *vs.* Hardie?"

"Mai — dearr sirr — my son met one of Heathfield's clerks at dinner, and he let out that the trile was not to come off. Put this and that together now."

"It will come off," said Mr. Compton, "and in five minutes at farthest."

In less than that time the learned judge came in, and before taking his seat made this extraordinary speech: —

"I hear this case will take three days to try; and we have only two days before us. It would be inconvenient to leave it unfinished; and I must proceed on circuit the day after to-morrow. It must be a *remanet:* no man can do more than time allows."

Plaintiff's counsel made a feeble remonstrance; then yielded. And the crier with sonorous voice called on the case of Bread *vs.* Cheese, in which there were pounds at stake, but no principle. Oh, with what zest they all went into it! being small men escaping from a great thing to a small one. Never hopped frogs into a ditch with more alacrity. Alfred left the court and hid himself, and the scalding tears forced their way down his cheeks at this heartless proceeding: to let all the witnesses come into court at a vast expense to the parties: and raise the cup of justice to the lips of the oppressed, and then pretend he knew a trial would last more than two days, and so shirk it. "I'd have made that a reason for sitting till midnight," said poor Alfred, "not for prolonging a poor injured man's agony four mortal months." He then prayed God earnestly for this great postponer's death as the only event that could give him

back an Englishman's right of being tried by his peers, and so went down to Oxford broken-hearted.

As for Sampson he was most indignant, and said a public man had no business with a private ear: and wanted to appeal to the press again: but the doughty doctor had a gentle but powerful ruler at home, as fiery horses are best ruled by a gentle hand. Mrs. Sampson requested him to write no more, but look round for an M. P. to draw these repeated defeats of justice to the notice of the House. Now there was a Mr. Bite, who had taken a prominent and honorable part in lunacy questions; headed committees and so on: this seemed the man. Dr. Sampson sent him a letter saying there was a flagrant case of a sane man falsely imprisoned, who had now been near a year applying for a jury, and juggled out of this constitutional right by arbitrary and unreasonable postponements: would Mr. Bite give him (Dr. Sampson) ten minutes and no more, when he would explain the case and leave documentary evidence behind him for Mr. Bite to test his statement? The philanthropical M.P. replied promptly in these exact words: —

"Mr. Bite presents his compliments to Dr. Sampson to state that it is impossible for him to go into his case, nor to give him the time he requests to do so."

Sampson was a little indignant at the man's insolence; but far more at having been duped by his public assumption of philanthropy. "The little pragmatical impostor!" he roared. "With what a sense o' relief th' animal flings off the mask of humanity when there is no easy eclat to be gained by putting 't on." He sent the philanthropical Bite's revelation of his private self to Alfred, who returned it with this single remark: "*Homunculi quanti sunt!*"

Dishonest suitors all try to postpone; but they do not gain unmixed good thereby. These delays give time

for more evidence to come in; and this slow-coming and chance evidence is singularly adverse to the unjust suitor. Of this came a notable example in October next, and made Richard Hardie determine to precipitate the trial, and even regret he had not fought it out long ago.

He had just returned from consulting Messrs. Heathfield, and sat down to a nice little dinner in his apartments (Sackville Street), when a visitor was announced; and in came the slouching little figure of Mr. Barkington, *alias* Noah Skinner.

DIAMOND CUT DIAMOND.

Mr. Hardie suppressed a start, and said nothing. Skinner bowed low with a mixture of his old cringing way, and a certain sly, triumphant leer, so that his body seemed to say one thing, and his face the opposite. Mr. Hardie eyed him, and saw that his coat was rusty, and his hat napless: then Mr. Hardie smelt a beggar, and prepared to parry all attempts upon his purse.

"I hope I see my old master well," said Skinner, coaxingly.

"Pretty well in body, Skinner; thank you."

"I had a deal of trouble to find you, sir. But I heard of the great lawsuit between Mr. Alfred and you, and I knew Mr. Heathfield was your solicitor; so I watched at his place day after day: and at last you came. Oh, I was so pleased when I saw your noble figure; but I wouldn't speak to you in the street for fear of disgracing you; I am such a poor little guy to be addressing a gentleman like you."

Now this sounded well on the surface, but below there was a subtle something Mr. Hardie did not like at all: but he took the cue, and said, "My poor Skinner do you think I would turn up my nose at a faithful old servant

like you? have a glass of wine with me, and tell me how you have been getting on." He went behind a screen and opened a door, and soon returned with a decanter, leaving the door open: now in the next room sat, unbeknown to Skinner, a young woman with white eyelashes, sewing buttons on Mr. Hardie's shirts. That astute gentleman gave her instructions, and important ones too, with a silent gesture; then reappeared and filled the bumper high to his faithful servant. They drank one another's healths with great cordiality, real or apparent. Mr. Hardie then asked Skinner carelessly, if he could do anything for him. Skinner said, "Well, sir, I am very poor."

"So am I, between you and me," said Mr. Hardie, confidentially; "I don't mind telling *you;* those confounded Commissioners of Lunacy wrote to Alfred's trustees, and I have been forced to replace a loan of five thousand pounds. That Board always sides with the insane. That crippled me, and drove me to the Exchange: and now what I had left is all invested in time-bargains. A month settles my fate: a little fortune, or absolute beggary."

"You'll be lucky, sir, you'll be lucky," said Skinner, cheerfully; "you have such a long head; not like poor little me; the Exchange soon burnt my wings. Not a shilling left of the thousand pounds, sir, you were so good as to give me for my faithful services. But you will give me another chance, sir, I know; I'll take better care this time." Mr. Hardie shook his head sorrowfully, and said it was impossible. Skinner eyed him askant, and remarked quietly, and half aside, "Of course I *could* go to the other party: but I shouldn't like to do that. They would come down handsome."

"What other party?"

"La, sir, what other party? why, Mrs. Dodd's, or Mr.

Alfred's; here's the trial coming on, you know, and of course if they could get me to go on the box and tell all I know, or half what I know, why, the judge and jury would say locking Mr. Alfred up for mad was a conspiracy."

Mr. Hardie quaked internally: but he hid it grandly, and once more was a Spartan gnawed beneath his robe by this little fox: "What," said he sternly, "after all I and mine have done for you and yours, would you be so base as to go and sell yourself to my enemies?"

"Never, sir," shouted Skinner, zealously: then in a whisper, "not if you'll make a bid for me."

"How much do you demand?"

"Only another thousand, sir."

"A thousand pounds!"

"Why, what is that to you, sir? you are rich enough to buy the eighth commandment out of the tables of ten per cent: and then the lawsuit, Hardies *versus* Hardies!"

"You have spoken plainly at last," said Mr. Hardie, grimly. "This is extorting money by threats. Do you know that nothing is more criminal, nor more easy to punish? I can take you before a magistrate, and imprison you on the instant for this attempt. I will too."

"Try it," said Skinner, coolly. "Where's your witness?"

"Behind that screen."

Peggy came forward directly with a pen in her hand. Skinner was manifestly startled and disconcerted. "I have taken all your words down, Mr. Skinner," said Peggy, softly: then to her master, "Shall I go for a policeman, sir?"

Mr. Hardie reflected. "Yes," said he sternly, "there's no other course with such a lump of treachery and ingratitude as this."

Peggy whipped on her bonnet.

"What a hurry you are in," whined Skinner, "a policeman ought to be the last argument for old friends to run to." Then, fawning spitefully, "Don't talk of indicting me, sir," said he; "it makes me shiver: why, how will you look when I up and tell them all how Captain Dodd was took with apoplexy in our office, and how you nailed fourteen thousand pounds off his senseless body, and forgot to put them down in your balance-sheet, so they are not whitewashed off like the rest?"

"Any witnesses to all this, Skinner?"

"Yes, sir."

"Who?"

"Well; your own conscience *for one*," said Skinner.

"He is mad, Peggy," said Mr. Hardie, shrugging his shoulders. He then looked Skinner full in the face, and said, "Nobody was ever seized with apoplexy in my office. Nobody ever gave me fourteen thousand pounds. And if this is the probable tale with which you come here to break the law and extort money, leave my house this instant: and if you ever dare to utter this absurd and malicious slander, you shall lie within four stone walls, and learn what it is for a shabby vagabond to come without a witness to his back, and libel a man of property and honor."

Skinner let him run on in this loud triumphant strain till he had quite done; then put out a brown skinny finger, and poked him lightly in the ribs, and said quietly, and oh, so dryly, with a knowing wink, "I've — got — the receipt."

CHAPTER XIX.

Mr. Hardie collapsed as if he had been a man inflated, and that touch had punctured him. "Ah!" said Skinner, in a mighty different tone: insolent triumph to wit.

After a pause, Mr. Hardie made an effort and said contemptuously, "The receipt (if any) was flung into the dust-hole and carried away. Do you think I have forgotten that?"

"Don't you believe it, sir," was the reply. "While you turned your back and sacked the money, I said to myself, 'Oho, is that the game?' and nailed the receipt. What a couple of scoundrels we were! I wouldn't have *her* know it for all your money. Come, sir, I see it's all right; you will shell out sooner than be posted."

Here Peggy interposed: "Mr. Skinner, be more considerate; my master is really poor just now."

"That is no reason why I should be insulted and indicted and trampled under foot," snarled Skinner all in one breath.

"Show me the receipt, and take my last shilling, you ungrateful, vindictive viper," groaned Mr. Hardie.

"Stuff and nonsense!" said Skinner. "I'm not a viper; I'm a man of business. Find me five hundred pounds; and I'll show you the receipt and keep dark. But I can't afford to *give* it you for that, of course."

Skinner triumphed, and made the great man apologize, writhing all the time, and wishing he was a day laborer with Peggy to wife, and fourteen honest shillings a week for his income. Having eaten humble pie, he agreed to

meet Skinner next Wednesday at midnight, alone, under a certain lamp on the North Kensington road: the interval (four days) he required to raise money upon his scrip. Skinner bowed himself out, fawning triumphantly. Mr. Hardie stood in the middle of the room motionless, scowling darkly. Peggy looked at him, and saw some dark and sinister resolve forming in his mind: she divined it, as such women can divine. She laid her hand on his arm, and said, softly, "Richard, it's not worth *that*." He started to find his soul read through his body so clearly. He trembled.

But it was only for a moment. "His blood be on his own head," he snarled. "This is not my seeking. He shall learn what it is to drive Richard Hardie to despair."

"No, no," implored Peggy; "there are other countries besides this; why not gather all you have, and cross the water? I'll follow you to the world's end, Richard."

"Mind your own business," said he, fiercely

She made no reply, but went softly and sat down again, and sewed the buttons on his shirts. Mr. Hardie wrote to Messrs. Heathfield to get Hardie *vs.* Hardie tried as soon as possible.

Meantime came a mental phenomenon: gliding down Sackville Street, victorious Skinner suddenly stopped, and clinched his hands; and his face writhed as if he had received a death-wound. In that instant remorse had struck him like lightning; and perhaps, whence comes the lightning. The sweet face and voice that had smiled on him, and cared for his body, and cared for his soul, came to his mind and knocked at his heart and conscience. He went home miserable with an inward conflict; and it lasted him all the four days: sometimes remorse got the better, sometimes avarice. He came to the interview still undecided what he should do. But, meantime, he had gone to a lawyer and made his will,

leaving his little all to Julia Dodd: a bad sign this; looked like compounding with his awakened conscience.

It was a dark and gusty night. Very few people were about. Skinner waited a little while, and shivered, for his avarice had postponed the purchase of a great-coat until Christmas Day. At last, when the coast seemed clear, Mr. Hardie emerged from a side street. Skinner put his hand to his bosom.

They met. Mr. Hardie said quietly, "I must ask you, just for form, to show me you have the receipt."

"Of course, sir; but not so near, please: no snatching, if I know it."

"You are wonderfully suspicious," said Mr. Hardie, trying to smile.

Skinner looked, and saw by the lamplight he was deadly pale. "Keep your distance a moment, sir," said he, and, on Mr. Hardie's complying, took the receipt out, and held it under the lamp.

Instantly Mr. Hardie drew a life-preserver, and sprang on him with a savage curse, and uttered a shriek of dismay; for he was met by the long, shiny barrel of a horse-pistol, that Skinner drew from his bosom, and levelled full in the haggard face that came at him. Mr. Hardie recoiled, crying, "No! no! for Heaven's sake!"

"What!" cried Skinner, stepping forward and hissing, "do you think I'm such a fool as to meet a thief unarmed? Come, cash up, or I'll blow you to atoms."

"No, no, no!" said Mr. Hardie, piteously, retreating as Skinner marched on him with long extended pistol. "Skinner," he stammered, "th—this is n—not b—b—business."

"Cash up, then; that's business. Fling the five hundred pounds down, and walk away. Mind, it is loaded with two bullets; I'll make a double entry on your great treacherous carcass."

"It's no use trying to deceive such a man as you," said Mr. Hardie, playing on his vanity. "I could not get the money before Saturday, and so I listened to the dictates of despair. Forgive me."

"Then come again Saturday night. Come alone, and I shall bring a man to see I'm not murdered. And look here, sir, if you don't come to the hour and do the right thing without any more of these un-business-like tricks, by Heaven I'll smash you before noon on Monday."

"I'll come."

"I'll blow you to Mr. Alfred and Miss Dodd."

"I'll come, I tell you."

"I'll post you for a thief on every brick in the Exchange."

"Have mercy, Skinner. Have pity on the wretched man whose bread you have eaten. I tell you I'll come."

"Well, mind you do then, cash and all," said Skinner, sulkily, but not quite proof against the reminiscences those humble words awakened.

Each walked backwards a good dozen steps, and then they took different roads, Skinner taking good care not to be tracked home. He went up the high stairs to the hole in the roof he occupied, and lighted a rushlight. He had half a mind to kindle a fire, he felt so chilly; but he had blocked up the vent, partly to keep out the cold, partly to shun the temptation of burning fuel. However, he stopped the keyhole with paper, and also the sides of the window, till he had shut the wintry air all out. Still, what with the cold and what with the reaction after so great an excitement, his feeble body began to shiver desperately. He thought at last he would light a foot-warmer he had just purchased for old iron at a broker's; *that* would only spend a halfpennyworth of charcoal. No, he wouldn't; he would look at his money; that would cheer him. He unripped a certain part of his

straw mattress and took out a bag of gold. He spread three hundred sovereigns on the floor and put the candle down among them. They sparkled; they were all new ones, and he rubbed them with an old toothbrush and whiting every week. "That's better than any fire," he said, "they warm the heart. For one thing they are my own: at all events I did not steal them, nor take them of a thief for a bribe to keep dark and defraud honest folk." Then remorse gripped him: he asked himself what he was going to do. "To rob an angel," was the answer. "The fourteen thousand pounds is all hers, and I could give it her in a moment. Curse him, he would have killed me for it."

Then he pottered about and took out his will. "Ah," said he, "that is all right so far. But what is a paltry three hundred when I help do her out of fourteen thousand? Villain!" Then, to ease his conscience, he took a slip of paper and wrote on it a short account of the receipt, and how he came by it; and lo, as if an unseen power had guided his hand, he added, "Miss Dodd lives at 66 Pembroke Street, and I am going to take it to her as soon as I am well of my cold." Whether this preceded an unconscious resolve which had worked on him secretly for some time, or whether it awakened such a resolve, I hardly know: but certain it is, that having written it, he now thought seriously of doing it; and, the more seriously he entertained the thought, the more good it seemed to do him. He got "The Sinner's Friend," and another good book she had lent him, and read a bit: then, finding his feet frozen, he lighted his chafer and blew it well, and put it under his feet and read. The good words began to reach his heart more and more: so did the thought of Julia's goodness. The chafer warmed his feet and legs. "Ay," said he, "men don't want fires; warm the feet, and the body warms itself." He took out

"the receipt," and held it in his hand, and eyed it greedily, and asked himself could he really part with it. He thought he could — to Julia. Still holding it tight in his left hand, he read on the good but solemn words that seemed to loosen his grasp upon that ill-gotten paper. "How good it was of her," he thought, "to come day after day and feed a poor little fellow like him, body and soul. She asked nothing back. She didn't know he could make her any return. Bless her! bless her!" he screamed. "Oh, how cruel I have been to her, and she so kind to me. She would never let me want, if I took her fourteen thousand pounds. Like enough give me a thousand, and help me save my poor soul, that I shall damn if I meet him again. I won't go his way again. Lead us not into temptation. I repent. Lord have mercy on me a miserable sinner!" And tears bedewed those wizened cheeks, tears of penitence, sincere, at least for the time.

A sleepy languor now came over him, and the good book fell from his hand: but his resolution remained unshaken; by and by, waking up from a sort of heavy doze, he took, as it were, a last look at the receipt, and murmured, "My head, how heavy it feels." But presently he roused himself, full of his penitent resolution, and murmured again brokenly, "I'll — take it to — Pembroke Street to—morrow: to—mor—row."

CHAPTER XX.

Mr. Hardie raised the money on his scrip, and at great inconvenience, for he was holding on five hundred thousand pounds' worth of old Turkish bonds over an unfavorable settling day, and wanted every shilling to pay his broker. If they did not rise by next settling day, he was a beggar. However, being now a desperate gamester, and throwing for his last stake, he borrowed this sum, and took it with a heavy heart to his appointment with Skinner. Skinner never came. Mr. Hardie waited till one o'clock. Two o'clock. No Skinner. Mr. Hardie went home hugging his five hundred pounds, but very uneasy. Next day he consulted Peggy. She shook her head, and said it looked very ugly. Skinner had most likely got angrier and angrier with thinking on the assault. "You will never see him again till the day of the trial: and then he will go down and bear false witness against you. Why not leave the country?"

"How can I, simpleton? My money is all locked up in time-bargains. No, I'm tied, tied to the stake; I'll fight to the last: and, if I'm defeated and disgraced, I'll die and end it."

Peggy implored him not to talk so. "I've been down to the court," said she, softly, "to see what it is like. There's a great hall; and he must pass through that to get into the little places where they try 'em. Let me be in that hall with the five hundred pounds, and I promise you he shall never appear against you. We will both go; you with the money, I with my woman's tongue."

He gave her his hand like a shaky monarch, and said she had more wit than he had.

Mr. Heathfield, who had contrived to postpone Hardie *vs.* Hardie six times in spite of Compton, could not hurry it on now with his co-operation. It hung fire from some cause or another a good fortnight: and in this fortnight Hardie senior endured the tortures of suspense. Skinner made no sign. At last, there stood upon the paper for next day, a short case of disputed contract, and Hardie *vs.* Hardie.

Now, this day, I must premise, was to settle the whole lawsuit: for while trial of the issue was being postponed and postponed, the legal question had been argued and disposed of. The very Queen's Counsel, unfavorable to the suit, was briefed with Garrow's views, and delivered them in court with more skill, clearness, and effect than Garrow ever could; then sat down, and whispered over rather contemptuously to Mr. Compton, "That is your argument, I think."

"And admirably put," whispered the attorney in reply.

"Well; now hear Saunders knock it to pieces."

Instead of that, it was Sergeant Saunders that got maltreated: first one judge had a peck at him: then another: till they left him scarce a feather to fly with; and, when Alfred's counsel rose to reply, the judges stopped him, and the chief of the court, Alfred's postponing enemy, delivered his judgment after this fashion: —

"We are all of opinion that this plea is bad in law. By the common law of England no person can be imprisoned as a lunatic unless actually insane at the time. It has been held so for centuries, and down to the last case. And wisely: for it would be most dangerous to the liberty of the subject, if a man could be imprisoned without remedy unless he could prove *mala fides* in the breast of the party incarcerating him. As for the statute,

it does not mend the matter, but rather the reverse; for it expressly protects duly authorized persons acting under the order and certificates, and this must be construed to except from the protection of the statute the person making the order."

The three *puisné* judges concurred and gave similar reasons. One of them said that if A imprisoned B for a *felon*, and B sued him, it was no defence to say that B, in his opinion, had imitated felony. They cited Elliot *vs.* Allen, Anderdon *vs.* Burrows, and Lord Mansfield's judgment in a very old case, the name of which I have unfortunately forgotten.

Judgment was entered for the plaintiff; and the defendant's ingenious plea struck off the record; and Hardie *vs.* Hardie became the leading case. But in law one party often wins the skirmish, and the other the battle. The grand fight, as I have already said, was to be to-day.

But the high hopes and ardor with which the young lovers had once come into court were now worn out by the postponement swindle, and the adverse events delay had brought on them. Alfred was not there: he was being examined in the schools; and had plumply refused to leave a tribunal that named its day and kept it — for Westminster, until his counsel should have actually opened the case. He did not believe trial by jury would ever be allowed him. Julia was there, but sad and comparatively listless. One of those strange, vague reports, which often herald more circumstantial accounts, had come home, whispering darkly that her father was dead, and buried on an island in the South Sea. She had kept this report from her mother, contrary to Edward's wish: but she implored him to restrain his fatal openness. In one thing both these sorely tried young people agreed, that there could be no marriage with Alfred now.

But here again Julia entreated her brother not to be candid; not to tell Alfred this at present. "Oh, do not go and dispirit him just now," she said, "or he will do something rash. No, he must and shall get his first-class, and win his trial; and then you know any lady will be too proud to marry him; and, when he is married and happy, you can tell him I did all I could for him, and hunted up the witnesses, and was his loving friend, though I could not — be — his — wife."

She could not say this without crying, but she said it for all that, and meant it too.

Besides helping Mr. Compton to get up the evidence, this true and earnest friend and lover had attended the court day after day, to watch how things were done, and, woman-like, to see what *pleased* and what *displeased* the court.

The witnesses subpœnaed on either side in Hardie *vs.* Hardie, began to arrive at ten o'clock, and a tall, stately man paraded Westminster Hall, to see if Skinner came with them; all other anxieties had merged in this: for the counsel had assured him if nothing unexpected turned up, Thomas Hardie would have a verdict, or if not, the damages would be nominal.

At last the court crier cried, with a loud voice, "Hardie *vs.* Hardie." Julia's eyes roved very anxiously for Alfred, and up rose Mr. Garrow, and stated to the court the substance of the declaration; "To this," he said, "three pleas have been pleaded: first, the plea of not guilty, which is a formal plea; also another plea, which has been demurred to, and struck off the record; and lastly, that at the time of the alleged imprisonment the plaintiff was of unsound mind, and a fit person to be confined; which is the issue now to be tried."

Mr. Garrow then sat down, very tired of this preliminary work, and wondering when he should have the luck

to conduct such a case as Hardie *vs.* Hardie; and leaned forward to be ready to prompt his senior, a portly counsel, whom Mr. Compton had retained because he was great at addressing juries, and no point of law could now arise in the case.

Colt, Q.C., rose like a tower, knowing very little of the facts, and seeming to know everything. He had a prodigious business, and was rather indolent, and often skimmed his brief at home, and then mastered it in court — if he got time. Now, it is a good general's policy to open a plaintiff's case warily, and reserve your rhetoric for the reply; and Mr. Colt always took this line when his manifold engagements compelled him, as in Hardie *vs.* Hardie, to teach his case first and learn it afterwards. I will only add, that in the course of his opening he was on the edge of seven distinct blunders; but Garrow watched him and always shot a whisper like a bullet just in time. Colt took it, and glided away from incipient error imperceptibly, and with a tact you can have no conception of. The jury did not detect the creaking of this machinery; Sergeant Saunders did, and grinned satirically; so did poor Julia, and her cheeks burned and her eyes flashed indignant fire. And, horror of horrors, Alfred did not appear.

Mr. Colt's opening may be thus condensed: The plaintiff was a young gentleman of great promise and distinction, on whom, as usual in these cases of false imprisonment, money was settled. He was a distinguished student at Eton and Oxford, and no doubt was ever expressed of his sanity till he proposed to marry, and take his money out of his trustees' hands by a marriage settlement. On this his father, who up to that time had managed his funds as principal trustee, showed him great personal hostility for some time, and looked out for a tool: that tool he soon found in his brother, the de-

fendant, a person who, it would be proved, had actually not seen the plaintiff for a year and a half, yet, with great recklessness and inhumanity, had signed away his liberty and his happiness behind his back. Then tools of another kind — the kind that anybody can buy, a couple of doctors — were, as usual, easily found to sign the certificates. One of these doctors had never seen him but for five minutes, and signed in manifest collusion with the other. They decoyed this poor young gentleman away on his wedding-morning — on his wedding-morning, gentlemen, mark that — and consigned him to the worst of all dungeons. What he suffered there he must himself relate to you: for we, who have the happiness to walk abroad in the air of reason and liberty, are little able to realize the agony of mind endured by a sane man confined among the insane. What we undertake is to prove his sanity up to the very hour of his incarceration; and also that he was quite sane at the time when a brutal attempt to recapture him by violence was made under the defendant's order, and defeated by his own remarkable intelligence and courage. Along with the facts the true reason why he was imprisoned will probably come out. But I am not bound to prove sinister motives. It is for the defendant to prove, if he can, that he had lawful motives for a lawless act; and that he exercised due precaution, and did not lend himself recklessly to the dark designs of others. If he succeed in this, that may go in mitigation of damages, though it cannot affect the verdict. *Our* principal object is the verdict, which will remove the foul aspersion cast on my injured client, and restore him to society. And to this verdict we are entitled, unless the other side can prove the plaintiff was insane. Call Alfred Hardie.

And with this he sat down.

An official called Alfred Hardie very loud. He made

no reply. Julia rose from her seat with dismay painted on her countenance. Compton's, Garrow's, and Colt's heads clashed together.

Mr. Colt jumped up again, and said, "My lud, I was not aware the gentleman they accuse of insanity is just being examined for high honors in the University of Oxford. (Aside to Compton) And if he doesn't come you may give them the verdict."

"Well," said the judge, "of course he will be here before you close your case."

On this the three heads clashed again, and Sergeant Saunders, for the defendant, popped up, and said with great politeness, and affectation of sympathy, "My lud, I can quite understand my learned friend's hesitation to produce his principal witness."

"You understand nothing about the matter," said Colt, cavalierly. "Call Mr. Harrington."

Mr. Harrington was Alfred's tutor at Eton, and deposed to his sanity there; he was not cross-examined. After him they went on step by step with a fresh witness for every six months, till they brought him close to the date of his incarceration; then they put in one of Julia's witnesses, Peterson, who swore Alfred had talked to him like a sane person that very morning, and repeated what had passed. Cross-examination only elicited that he and Alfred were no longer good friends, which rather strengthened the evidence. Then Giles and Hannah, now man and wife, were called, and swore he was sane all the time he was at Silverton House. Mr. Saunders diminished the effect by eliciting that they had left on bad terms with Mr. Baker, and that Alfred had given them money since. But this was half cured on re-examination, by being set down to gratitude on Alfred's part. And now the judge went to luncheon, and in came a telegraphic message to say Alfred was in the fast train

coming up. This was good news and bad. They had hoped he would drop in before. They were approaching that period of the case, when not to call the plaintiff must produce a vile impression. The judge, out of good-nature, I suspect, was longer at luncheon than usual, and every minute was so much gained to Mr. Compton and Julia, who were in a miserable state of anxiety. Yet it was equalled by Richard Hardie's, who never entered the court, but paced the hall the livelong day to intercept Noah Skinner. And, when I tell you that Julia had consulted Mr. Green, and that he had instantly pronounced Mr. Barkington to be a man from Barkington who knew the truth about the fourteen thousand pounds, and that the said Green and his myrmidons were hunting Mr. Barkington like beagles, you will see that R. Hardie's was no vain terror. At last the judge returned, and Mr. Colt was obliged to put in his reserves, so called Dr. Sampson. Instantly a very dull trial became an amusing one; the scorn with which he treated the opinion of Dr. Wycherley and Mr. Speers, and medical certificates in general, was so droll coming from a doctor and so racily expressed, that the court was convulsed. Also in cross-examination by Saunders he sparred away in such gallant style with that accomplished advocate that it was mighty refreshing. The judge put in a few intelligent questions after counsel had done, and surprised all the doctors in court with these words: "I am aware, sir, that you were the main instrument in putting down blood-letting in this country."

What made Sampson's evidence particularly strong was that he had seen the plaintiff the evening before his imprisonment.

At this moment three men, all of them known to the reader, entered the court; one was our old acquaintance Fullalove, another was of course Vespasian, and the third was the missing plaintiff.

A buzz announced his arrival, and expectation rose nigh. Mr. Colt called him with admirably feigned nonchalance; he stepped into the box, and there was a murmur of surprise and admiration at his bright countenance and manly bearing.

Of course to give his evidence would be to write "Hard Cash" over again. It is enough to say that his examination in chief lasted all that day, and an hour of the next.

Colt took him into the asylum, and made him say what he had suffered there to swell the damages. The main points his examination in chief established were his sanity during his whole life, the money settled on him, the means the doctors took to irritate him, and then sign him excited, the subserviency of his uncle to his father, the double motive his father had in getting him imprisoned, the business of the fourteen thousand pounds.

When Colt sat down at eleven o'clock on the second day, the jury looked indignant, and the judge looked very grave, and the case very black.

Mr. Saunders electrified his attorney by saying, "My advice is, don't cross-examine him."

Heathfield implored him not to take so strange a course.

On this Saunders shrugged his shoulders, rose, and cross-examined Alfred about the vision of one Captain Dodd he had seen, and about his suspicions of his father.

"Had not Richard Hardie always been a kind and liberal father?" To this he assented. "Had he not sacrificed a large fortune to his creditors?" Plaintiff believed so. "On reflection, then, did not plaintiff think he must have been under an illusion?" No, he had gone by direct evidence.

Confining himself sagaciously to this one question,

and exerting all his skill and pertinacity, Saunders succeeded in convincing the court that the Hard Cash was a myth, a pure chimera. The defendant's case looked up, for there are many intelligent madmen with a single illusion.

The re-examination was of course very short but telling, for Alfred swore that Miss Julia Dodd had helped him to carry home the phantom of her father, and that Miss Dodd had a letter from her father to say that he was about to sail with the other phantom, the fourteen thousand pounds.

Here Mr. Saunders interposed, and said that evidence was inadmissible. Let him call Miss Dodd.

Colt. How do you know I'm not going to call her?

The Judge. If you are, it is superfluous; if not, it is inadmissible.

Mr. Compton cast an inquiring glance up at a certain gallery. A beautiful girl bowed her head in reply, with a warm blush, and such a flash of her eye; and Mr. Colt said, "As my learned friend was afraid to cross-examine the plaintiff on any point but this, and as I mean to respond to his challenge and call Miss Dodd, I will not trouble the plaintiff any further."

Through the whole ordeal Alfred showed a certain flavor of Eton and Oxford that won all hearts. His replies were frank and honest, and under cross-examination he was no more to be irritated than if Saunders had been Harrow bowling at him, or the Robin sparring with him. The sergeant, who was a gentleman, indicated some little regret at the possible annoyance he was causing him. Alfred replied with a grand air of good-fellowship, "Do not think so poorly of me as to suppose I feel aggrieved because you are an able advocate and do your duty to your client, sir."

The Judge. That is very handsomely said. I am

afraid you have got an awkward customer in a case of this kind, Brother Saunders.

Sergeant Saunders. It is not for want of brains he is mad, my lord.

Alfred. That is a comfort, any way. (Laughter.)

When counsel had done with him, the judge used his right, and put several shrewd and unusual questions to him; asked him to define insanity; he said he could only do it by examples; and he abridged several intelligent madmen, their words and ways, and contrasted them with the five or six sane people he had fallen in with in asylums, showing his lordship plainly that *he* could tell any insane person whatever from a sane one, and *vice versâ*. This was the most remarkable part of the trial, to see this shrewd old judge extracting from a real observer and logical thinker those positive *indicia* of sanity and insanity, which exist, but which no lawyer has ever yet been able to extract from any psychological physician in the witness-box. At last he was relieved, and sat sucking an orange among the spectators, for they had parched his throat amongst them, I promise you.

Julia Dodd entered the box, and a sunbeam seemed to fill the court. She knew what to do; her left hand was gloved, but her white right hand bare. She kissed the book, and gave her evidence in her clear, mellow, melting voice; gave it reverently and modestly, for to her the court was a church. She said how long she had been acquainted with Alfred, and how his father was adverse, and her mother had thought it was because they did not pass for rich, and had told her they *were* rich; and with this she produced David's letter, and she also swore to having met Alfred and others carrying her father in a swoon from his father's very door. She deposed to Alfred's sanity on her wedding-eve, and on the day his recapture was attempted.

Saunders, against his own judgment, was instructed to cross-examine her; and, without meaning it, he put a question which gave her deep distress. "Are you now engaged to the plaintiff?" She looked timidly round, and saw Alfred, and hesitated. The sergeant pressed her politely, but firmly.

"Must I reply to that?" she said, piteously.

"If you please."

"Then, no. Another misfortune has now separated him and me forever."

"What is that, pray?"

"My father is said to have died at sea, and my mother thinks *he* is to blame."

The Judge (to Saunders). What on earth has this to do with Hardie against Hardie?

Saunders. You are warmly interested in the plaintiff's success?

Julia. Oh, yes, sir.

Colt (aside to Garrow). The fool is putting his foot into it; there's not a jury in England that would give a verdict to part two interesting young lovers.

Saunders. You are attached to him?

Julia. Ah, that I do.

This burst, intended for poor Alfred, not the court, baffled cross-examination and grammar and everything else. Saunders was wise and generous, and said no more.

Colt cast a glance of triumph, and declined to re-examine. He always let well alone. The judge, however, evinced a desire to trace the fourteen thousand pounds from Calcutta, but Julia could not help him; that mysterious sum had been announced by letter as about to sail, and then no more was heard about it till Alfred accused his father of having it. All endeavors to fill this hiatus failed. However, Julia, observing that

in courts material objects affect the mind most, had provided herself with all the *pièces de conviction* she could find, and she produced her father's empty pocket-book, and said, when he was brought home senseless, this was in his breast-pocket.

"Hand it up to me," said the judge. He examined it, and said it had been in the water.

"Captain Dodd was wrecked off the French coast," suggested Mr. Saunders.

"My learned friend had better go into the witness-box if he means to give evidence," said Mr. Colt.

"You are very much afraid of a very little truth," retorted Saunders.

The judge stopped this sham *rencontre*, by asking the witness whether her father had been wrecked. She said "Yes."

"And that is how the money was lost," persisted Saunders.

"Possibly," said the judge.

"I'm darned if it was," said Joshua Fullalove, composedly.

Instantly all heads were turned in amazement at this audacious interruption to the soporific decorum of an English court. The transatlantic citizen received this battery of eyes with complete imperturbability.

"Si-lence!" roared the crier, awaking from a nap, with an instinct that something unusual had happened. But the shrewd old judge had caught the sincerity with which the words were uttered, and put on his spectacles to examine the speaker.

"Are you for the plaintiff or the defendant?"

"I don't know either of 'em from Adam, my lord. But I know Captain Dodd's pocket-book by the bullet-hole."

"Indeed! You had better call this witness, Mr. Colt."

"Your lordship must excuse me; I am quite content with my evidence," said the wary advocate.

"Well, then, I shall call him as *amicus curiæ*, and the defendant's counsel can cross-examine him."

Fullalove went into the box, was sworn, identified the pocket-book, and swore he had seen fourteen thousand pounds in it on two occasions. With very little prompting, he told the sea-fight, and the Indian darky's attempt to steal the money, and pointed out Vespasian as the rival darky who had baffled the attempt. Then he told the shipwreck to an audience now breathless, — and imagine the astonished interest with which Julia and Edward listened to this stranger telling them the new strange story of their own father! — and lastly, the attempt of the two French wreckers and assassins, and how it had been baffled. And so the mythical cash was tracked to Boulogne.

The judge then put this question: "Did Captain Dodd tell you what he intended to do with it?"

Fullalove (reverently). I think, my lord, he said he was going to give it to his wife. (Sharply.) Well, what is it, old hoss? What are you making mugs at me for? Don't you know it's clean against law to telegraph a citizen in the witness-box?

The Judge. This won't do, this won't do.

The Crier. Silence in the court!

"Do you hyar now what his lordship says?" said Fullalove, with ready tact. "If you know anything more, come up hyar and swear it like an enlightened citizen. Do you think I'm going to swear for tew?" With this Vespasian and Fullalove proceeded to change places amidst roars of laughter at the cool, off-hand way this pair arranged forensicalities; but Sergeant Saunders requested Fullalove to stay where he was. "Pray, sir," said he, slowly, "who retained you for a witness in this cause?"

Fullalove looked puzzled.

"Of course somebody asked you to drop in here so very accidentally; come, now, who was it?"

"I'm God Almighty's witness dropped from the clouds, I cal'late."

"Come, sir, no prevarication. How came you here just at the nick of time?"

"Counsellor, when I'm treated polite, I'm ile; but rile me, and I'm thunder stuffed with pison. Don't you raise my dander, and I'll tell you. I have undertaken to educate this yar darky,"—here he stretched out a long arm, and laid his hand on Vespasian's woolly pate—"and I'm bound to raise him to the Eu-ropean model. (Laughter.) So I said to him, coming over Westminster Bridge, 'Now, there's a store hyar where they sell a very extraordinary fixin, and it's called justice; they sell it tarnation dear, *but* prime.' So I make tracks for the very court where I got the prime article three years ago, against a varmint that was breaking the seventh and eighth commandments over me, adulterating my patent and then stealing it. Blast him! (A roar of laughter.) And coming along I said, This old country's got some good pints, after all, old hoss. One is, they'll sell you justice dear, *but* prime, in these yar courts, if you were born at Kamschatkee; and the other is, hyar darkies are free as air, disenthralled by the univarsal genius of British liberty. And then I pitched Counsellor Curran's bunkum into this darky, and he sucked it in like mother's milk, and in we came on tiptoe, and the first thing we heard was a freeborn Briton treated wus than ever a nigger in Old Kentuck, decoyed away from his gal, shoved into a darned madhouse, the darbies clapped on him"—

"We don't want your comments on the case, sir."

"No, nor any other free and enlightened citizen's, I reckon. Wal, Vespasian and me sat like mice in a snow-

drift, and hid our feelings out of good manners, being strangers, till his lordship got etarnally fixed about the captain's pocket-book. 'Vesp.,' says I, 'this hurts my feelings powerful.' Says I, 'This hyar lord did the right thing about my patent, he summed up just, and now he is in an everlasting fix himself; one good turn deserves another, I'll get him out of this fix, any way.'" Here the witness was interrupted with a roar of laughter that shook the court. Even the judge leaned back and chuckled genially, though quietly. And right sorrowful was every Briton there when Saunders closed abruptly the cross-examination of Joshua Fullalove.

His lordship then said he wished to ask Vespasian a question.

Saunders lost patience. "What, another *amicus curiæ*, my lud! This is unprecedented."

"Excuse my curiosity, brother Saunders," said the judge, ironically. "I wish to trace this fourteen thousand pounds as far as possible. Have you any particular objection to the truth on this head of evidence?"

"No, my lud; I never urge objections when I can't enforce them."

"Then you are a wise man. (To Vespasian after he had been sworn:) Pray, did Captain Dodd tell you what he intended to do with this money?"

"Iss, massa judge, massa captan told dis child he got a branker in some place in de ole country, called Barkinton. And he said dis branker bery good branker, much sartainer not to break dan the Brank of England. (A howl.) De captan said he take de money to dis yer branker, and den hab no more trouble wid it. 'Den it off my stomach,' de captan say, and dis child heerd him. Yah!"

The plaintiff's case being apparently concluded, the judge retired for a few minutes.

In the buzz that followed, a note was handed to Mr. Compton.

"*Skinner!* On a hot scent. Sure to find him to-day. N.B. — He is wanted by another party. There is something curious afoot."

Compton wrote on a slip, —

"For Heaven's sake bring him directly. In half an hour it will be too late."

Green hurried out and nearly ran against Mr. Richard Hardie, who was moodily pacing Westminster Hall at the climax of his own anxiety. To him all turned on Skinner. Five minutes passed, ten, fifteen, twenty; all the plaintiff's party had their eyes on the door, but Green did not return, and the judge did. Then, to gain a few minutes more, Mr. Colt, instructed by Compton, rose and said with great solemnity, "We are about to call our last witness; the living have testified to my client's sanity, and now we shall read you the testimony of the dead."

Saunders. That I object to, of course.

Colt. Does my learned friend mean to say he objects at random?

Saunders. Nothing of the kind. I object on the law of evidence, a matter on which my learned friend seems to be under a hallucination as complete as his client's about that fourteen thousand pounds.

Colt.

There's none ever feared
That the truth should be heard,
But they whom the truth would indict.

Saunders. A court of justice is not the place for old songs, and new law.

Colt. Really, my learned friend is the objective case incarnate. (To Compton. — I can't keep this nonsense up forever. Is Skinner come?) He has a mania for objection, and with your lordship's permission I'll buy a couple of doctors and lock him up in an asylum as he leaves the court this afternoon. (Laughter.)

The Judge. A very good plan; then you'll no longer feel the weight of his abilities. I conclude, Mr. Colt, you intend to call a witness who will swear to the deceased person's handwriting, and that it was written in the knowledge death was at hand.

Colt. Certainly, my lord. I can call Miss Julia Dodd.

Saunders. That I need not take the trouble of objecting to.

The Judge (with some surprise). No, Mr. Colt. That will never do. You have examined her, and re-examined her.

I need hardly say Mr. Colt knew very well he could not call Julia Dodd; but he was fighting for seconds now, to get in Skinner. "Call Edward Dodd."

Edward was sworn, and asked if he knew the late Jane Hardie.

"I knew her well," said he.

"Is that her handwriting?"

"It is."

"Where was it written?"

"In my mother's house at Barkington."

"Under what circumstances?"

"She was dying — of a blow given her by a maniac called Maxley."

"Maxley!" said the judge to counsel. "I remember the Queen *vs.* Maxley. I tried him myself at the assizes. It was for striking a young lady with a bludgeon, of which she died. Maxley was powerfully defended; and it was proved that his wife had died, and he had been driven mad for a time by her father's bank breaking. The jury *would* bring in a verdict that was no verdict at all; as I took the liberty to tell them at the time. The judges dismissed it, and Maxley was eventually discharged."

Colt. No doubt that was the case, my lord. (To the witness.) Did Jane Hardie know she was dying?

"Oh, yes, sir. She told us all so."

"To whom did she give this letter?"

"To my sister."

"Oh, to your sister? To Miss Julia Dodd?"

"Yes, sir; but not for herself. It was to give to Alfred Hardie."

"Can you read the letter? it is rather faintly written. It is written in pencil, my lord."

"I *could* read it, sir; but I hope you will excuse me. She that wrote it was very, very dear to me."

The young man's full voice faltered as he uttered these words, and he turned his lion-like eyes soft and imploring on the judge. That venerable and shrewd old man, learned in human nature as well as in law, comprehended in a moment, and said kindly, "You misunderstand him. Witnesses do not read letters *out* in court. Let the letter be handed up to me." This was fortunate, for the court cuckoo, who intones most letters, would have read all the sense and pathos out of this, with his monotonous sing-song.

The judge read it carefully to himself with his glasses, and told the jury it seemed a genuine document; then the crier cried, "Silence in the court," and his lordship turned towards the jury and read the letter slowly and solemnly: —

"DEAR, DEAR BROTHER, — Your poor little Jane lies dying, suddenly but not painfully, and my last earthly thoughts are for my darling brother. Some wicked person has said you are insane. I deny this with my dying breath and my dying hand. You came to me the night before the wedding that was to be, and talked to me most calmly, rationally, and kindly; so that I could not resist your reasons, and went to your wedding, which, till then, I did not intend. Show these words to your

slanderers when I am no more. But, O Alfred, even this is of little moment compared with the world to come. By all our affection grant me one request. Battered, wounded, dying in my prime, what would be my condition but for the Saviour, whom I have loved, and with whom I hope soon to be? He smooths the bed of death for me; He lights the dark valley. I rejoice to die and be with Him. Oh, turn to Him, dear brother, without one hour's delay, and then how short will be this parting. This is your dying sister's one request, who loves you dearly."

With the exception of Julia's sobs, not a sound was heard as the judge read it. Many eyes were wet, and the judge himself was visibly affected, and pressed his handkerchief a moment to his eyes. "These are the words of a Christian woman, gentlemen," he said. And there was silence. A girl's hand seemed to have risen from the grave to defend her brother, and rend the veil from falsehood.

Mr. Colt, out of pure tact, subdued his voice to the key of the sentiment thus awakened, and said impressively, "Gentlemen of the jury, that is our case;" and so sat down.

CHAPTER XXI.

Sergeant Saunders thought it prudent to let the emotion subside before opening the defendant's case; so he disarranged his papers, and then rearranged them as before, and, during this, a person employed by Richard Hardie went out and told him this last untoward piece of evidence. He winced, but all was overbalanced by this, that Skinner had not come to bear witness for the plaintiff.

Sergeant Saunders rose with perfect dignity and confidence, and delivered a masterly address. In less than ten minutes the whole affair took another color under that plausible tongue. The tactician began by declaring that the plaintiff was perfectly sane, and his convalescence was a matter of such joy to the defendant, that not even the cruel misinterpretation of facts and motives, to which his amiable client had been exposed, could rob him of that sacred delight. "Our case, gentlemen, is that the plaintiff is sane, and that he owes his sanity to those prompt, wise, and benevolent measures, which *we* took eighteen months ago, at an unhappy crisis of his mind, to preserve his understanding and his property. Yes, his property, gentlemen; that property which, in a paroxysm of mania, he was going to throw away, as I shall show you by an unanswerable document. He comes here to slander us and mulct us out of five thousand pounds, but I shall show you he is already ten thousand pounds the richer for that act of ours, for which he debits us five thousand pounds, instead of crediting us twice the sum. Gentlemen, I cannot, like my learned

friend, call witnesses from the clouds, from the United States, and from the grave; for it has not occurred to my client, strong in the sense of his kindly and honorable intentions, to engage gentlemen from foreign parts, with woolly locks and nasal twangs, to drop in accidentally, and eke out the fatal gaps in evidence. The class of testimony we stand upon is less romantic: it does not seduce the imagination nor play upon the passions, but it is of a much higher character in sober men's eyes, especially in a court of law. I rely, not on witnesses dropped from the clouds, and the stars, and the stripes — to order, nor even on the prejudiced statements of friends and sweethearts, who always swear from the heart rather than from the head and the conscience, but on the calm testimony of indifferent men, and on written documents furnished by the plaintiff, and on contemporaneous entries in the books of the asylum, which entries formally describe the plaintiff's acts, and were put down at the time, — at the time, gentlemen, — with no idea of a trial at law to come, but in compliance with the very proper provisions of a wise and salutary Act. I shall also lay before you the evidence of the medical witnesses who signed the certificates, men of probity and honor, and who have made these subtle maladies of the mind the special study of their whole life. I shall also call the family doctor, who has known the plaintiff and his ailments, bodily and mental, for many years, and communicated his suspicions to one of the first psychological physicians of the age, declining, with a modesty which we, who know less of insanity than he does, would do well to imitate, — declining, I say, to pronounce a positive opinion unfavorable to the plaintiff till he should have compared notes with this learned man, and profited by his vast experience."

In this strain he continued for a good hour, until the

defendant's case seemed to be a thing of granite. His oration ended, he called a string of witnesses, every one of whom bore the learned counsel out by his evidence in chief.

But here came the grand distinction between the defendant's case and the plaintiff's. Cross-examination had hardly shaken the plaintiff's witnesses: it literally dissolved the defendant's. Osmond was called, and proved Alfred's headaches and pallor, and his own suspicions. But then Colt forced him to admit that many young people had headaches without going mad, and were pale when thwarted in love without going mad, and that as to the fourteen thousand pounds and the phantom he *knew* nothing, but had taken all that for granted on Mr. Richard Hardie's word.

Dr. Wycherley deposed to Alfred's being insane and abnormally irritable, and under a pecuniary illusion, as stated in his certificate, and to his own vast experience. But the fire of cross-examination melted all his polysyllables into guess-work and hearsay. It melted out of him that he, a stranger, had intruded on the young man's privacy, and had burst into a most delicate topic, his disagreement with his father, and so had himself created the very irritation he had set down to madness. He also had to admit that he knew nothing about the fourteen thousand pounds, or the phantom, but had taken for granted the young man's own father, who consulted him, was not telling him a deliberate and wicked falsehood.

Colt. In short, sir, you were retained to make the man out insane, just as my learned friend there is retained.

Wycherley. I think, sir, it would not be consistent with the dignity of my profession to notice that comparison.

Colt. I leave defendant's counsel to thank you for that. Come, never mind *dignity;* let us have a little

truth. Is it consistent with your dignity to tell us whether the keepers of private asylums pay you a commission for all the patients you consign to durance vile by your certificates?

Dr. Wycherley fenced with this question, but the remorseless Colt only kept him longer under torture, and dragged out of him that he received fifteen per cent from the asylum keepers for every patient he wrote insane, and that he had an income of eight hundred pounds a year from that source alone. This, of course, was the very thing to prejudice a jury against the defence; and Colt's art was to keep to their level.

Speers, cross-examined, failed to conceal that he was a mere tool of Wycherley's, and had signed in manifest collusion, adhering to the letter of the statute, but violating its spirit; for certainly the Act never intended by "separate examination" that two doctors should come into the passage, and walk into the room alternately, then reunite, and do the signing as agreed before they ever saw the patient. As to the illusion about the fourteen thousand pounds, Speers owned that the plaintiff had not uttered a word about the subject, but had peremptorily declined it. He had to confess, too, that he had taken for granted Dr. Wycherley was correctly informed about the said illusion.

"In short," said the judge, interposing, "Dr. Wycherley took the very thing for granted which it was his duty to ascertain; and you, sir, not to be behind Dr. Wycherley, took the thing for granted at second hand." And when Speers had left the box, he said to Sergeant Saunders, "If this case is to be defended seriously you had better call Mr. Richard Hardie without further delay."

"It is my wish, my lud; but I am sorry to say he is in the country very ill, and I have no hope of seeing him here before to-morrow."

"Oh, well; so that you *do* call him. I shall not lay hearsay before the jury; hearsay gathered from Mr. Richard Hardie, whom you will call in person if the reports he has circulated have any basis whatever in truth."

Mr. Saunders said coolly, "Mr. Richard Hardie is not the defendant," and flowed on; nor would any but a lawyer have suspected what a terrible stab the judge had given him so quietly.

The surgeon of Silverton House was then sworn, and produced the case book; and there stood the entries which had been so fatal to Alfred with the visiting justices. Suicide, homicide, self-starvation. But the plaintiff got to Mr. Colt with a piece of paper, on which he had written his view of all this; and cross-examination dissolved the suicide and homicide into a spirited attempt to escape and resist a false imprisonment. As for the self-starvation, Colt elicited that Alfred had eaten at six o'clock though not at two. "And pray, sir," said he, contemptuously, to the witness, "do you never stir out of a madhouse? Do you imagine that gentlemen in their senses dine at two o'clock in the nineteenth century?"

"No. I don't say that."

"What *do* you say, then? Is forcible imprisonment of a bridegroom in a madhouse the thing to give a *gentleman* a *factitious* appetite at *your* barbarous dinner-hour?"

In a word, Colt was rough with this witness, and nearly smashed him. Saunders fought gallantly on, and put in Lawyer Crawford with his draft of the insane deed, as he called it, by which the erotic monomaniac Alfred divested himself of all his money in favor of the Dodds. There was no dissolving this deed away; and Crawford swore he had entreated the plaintiff not to

insist on his drawing so unheard-of a document; but opposition or question seemed to irritate his client, so that he had complied, and the deed was to have been signed on the wedding-day.

All the lawyers present thought this looked really mad. Fancy a man signing away his property to his wife's relatives! The court, which had already sat long beyond the usual time, broke up, leaving the defendant with this advantage. Alfred Hardie and his friends made a little knot in the hall outside, and talked excitedly over the incidents of the trial. Mr. Compton introduced Fullalove and Vespasian. They all shook hands with them, and thanked them warmly for the timely and most unexpected aid. But Green and a myrmidon broke in upon their conversation. "I am down on Mr. Barkington, *alias* Noah Skinner. It isn't very far from here, if you will follow me." Green was as excited as a foxhound when pug has begun to trail his brush: the more so that another client of his wanted Noah Skinner; and so the detective was doing a double stroke of business. He led the way: it was dry, and they all went in pairs after him into the back slums of Westminster; and a pretty part that is.

Now as they went along Alfred hung behind with Julia, and asked her what on earth she meant by swearing that it was all over between her and him. "Why, your last letter was full of love, dearest; what could you be thinking of to say that?"

She shook her head sadly, and revealed to him, with many prayers for forgiveness, that she had been playing a part of late; that she had concealed her father's death from him, and the fatal barrier interposed. "I was afraid you would be disheartened, and lose your first-class and perhaps your trial. But you are safe now, dear Alfred: I am sure the judge sees through them, for

I have studied him for you. I know his face by heart, and all his looks and what they mean. My Alfred will be cleared of this wicked slander, and happy with some one — ah!"

"Yes, I mean to be happy with *some one*," said Alfred. "*I* am not one of your self-sacrificing angels, thank Heaven! You shall not sacrifice us to your mother's injustice nor to the caprices of fate. We love one another; but you would immolate me for the pleasure of immolating yourself. Don't provoke me too far, or I'll carry you off by force. I swear it, by Him who made us both."

"Dearest, how wildly you talk!" And with this Julia hung her head, and had a guilty thrill. She could not help thinking that eccentric little measure would relieve her of the sin of disobedience.

After making known to her his desperate resolution, Alfred was silent, and they went sadly side by side; so dear, so near, yet always some infernal thing or other coming between them. They reached a passage in a miserable street. At the mouth stood two of Green's men, planted there to follow Skinner should he go out; but they reported all quiet. "Bring the old gentleman up," said Green. "I appointed him six o'clock, and it's on the stroke." He then descended the passage, and, striking a light, led the way up a high stair. Skinner lived on the fifth story. Green tapped at his door. "Mr. Barkington."

No reply.

"Mr. Barkington, I've brought you some money."

No reply.

"Perhaps he is not at home," said Mr. Compton.

"Oh, yes, sir, I sent a sharp boy up, and he picked the paper out of the keyhole and saw him sitting reading."

He then applied his own eye to the keyhole. "I see something black," said he. "I think he suspects."

While he hesitated they became conscious of a pungent vapor stealing through the now open keyhole.

"Hallo!" said Green, "what is this?"

Fullalove observed coolly that Mr. Skinner's lungs must be peculiarly made, if he could breathe in that atmosphere. "If you want to see him alive, let me open the door."

"There's something amiss here," said Green, gravely.

At that Fullalove whipped out a tool no bigger than a nutcracker, forced the edge in, and sent the door flying open. The room or den was full of an acrid vapor, and close to them sat he they sought, motionless.

"Keep the lady back," cried Green, and threw the vivid light of his bull's-eye on a strange, grotesque, and ghastly scene. The floor was covered with bright sovereigns that glittered in the lamp-light. On the table was an open book, and a candle quite burned down; the grease had run into a circle.

And, as was that grease to the expired light, so was the thing that sat there in human form to the Noah Skinner they had come to seek. Dead this many a day of charcoal fumes, but preserved from decomposition by those very fumes, sat Noah Skinner, dried into bones and leather, waiting for them with his own Hard Cash and with theirs; for, creeping awe-struck round that mummified figure seated dead on his pool of sovereigns, they soon noticed in his left hand a paper; it was discolored by the vapor and part hid by the dead thumb, but thus much shone out clear and amazing, that it was a banker's receipt to David Dodd, Esq., for fourteen thousand and ten pounds, drawn at Barkington, and signed for Richard Hardie by Noah Skinner. Julia had drawn back and was hiding her face, but soon curiosity strug-

gled with awe in the others: they peeped at the receipt; they touched the weird figure. Its yellow skin sounded like a drum, and its joints creaked like a puppet's. At last Compton suggested that Edward Dodd ought to secure that valuable document. "No, no," said Edward; "it is too like robbing the dead."

"Then I will," said Compton.

But he found the dead thumb and finger would not part with the receipt; then, as a trifle turns the scale, he hesitated in turn: and all but Julia stood motionless round the body that held the receipt, the soul of the lost cash, and still, as in life, seemed loath to part with it.

Then Fullalove came beside the arm-chair, and said with simple dignity, "I'm a man from foreign parts; I have no interest here but justice; and justice I'll dew." He took the dead arm, and the joint creaked; he applied the same lever to the bone and parchment hand he had to the door; it creaked too, but more faintly, and opened and let out this: —

No. 17. *Barkington, Nov. 10, 1847.*

Received *of David Dodd, Esq., the sum of Fourteen Thousand and Ten Pounds Twelve Shillings and Six Pence,*

to account for on demand.

For Richard Hardie,

£14,010: 12: 6. *Noah Skinner.*

A stately foot came up the stair, but no one heard it. All were absorbed in the strange, weird sight, and this great stroke of fate — or of Providence.

"This is yours, I reckon," said Fullalove, and handed the receipt to Edward. "No, no!" said Compton. "See: I've just found a will, bequeathing all he has in the

world, with his blessing, to Miss Julia Dodd. These sovereigns are yours, then. But, above all, the paper: as your legal adviser, I insist on your taking it immediately. Possession is nine points. However, it is actually yours, in virtue of this bequest."

A solemn, passionless voice seemed to fall on them from the clouds, —

"No; it is mine."

My story must now return on board the Vulture. Just before noon, the bell the half-hours are struck on was tolled to collect the ship's company; and soon the gangways and booms were crowded, and even the yards were manned with sailors, collected to see their shipmate committed to the deep. Next came the lieutenants and midshipmen and stood reverently on the deck: the body was brought and placed on a grating. Then all heads being uncovered below and aloft, the chaplain read the solemn service of the dead.

Many tears were shed by the rough sailors, the more so that to most of them, though not to the officers, it was now known that poor Billy had not always been before the mast, but had seen better days, and commanded vessels, and saved lives; and now he had lost his own.

The service is the same as ashore, with this exception: that the words, "We commit his body to the ground, ashes to ashes, dust to dust," etc., are altered at sea thus: "We commit his body to the deep, to be turned into corruption, looking for the resurrection of the body when the sea shall give up her dead; and the life of the world to come." At these words, the body is allowed to glide off the grating into the sea. The chaplain's solemn voice drew near those very words, and the tears of pity fell faster; and Georgie White, an affectionate boy, sobbed violently, and shivered beforehand at the sullen plunge

that he knew would soon come, and then he should see no more poor Billy who had given his life for his.

At this moment the captain came flying on deck, and jumping on to a gun, cried sharply, "Avast! Haul that body aboard."

The sharp voice of command cut across the solemn words and tones in the most startling way. The chaplain closed his book with a look of amazement and indignation: the sailors stared, and for the first time did not obey an order. To be sure, it was one they had never heard before. Then the captain got angry, and repeated his command louder, and the body was almost jerked in board.

"Carry him to my cabin, and uncover his face."

By this time, nothing could surprise Jacky Tar. Four sailors executed the order promptly.

"Bosen, pipe to duty."

While the men were dispersing to their several stations, Captain Bazalgette apologized to the chaplain, and explained to him and to the officers. But I give his explanation in my own words. Finding the ship quiet, the purser went to the captain down below, and asked him coolly what entry he should make in the ship's books about this William Thompson, who was no more William Thompson than he was. "What do you mean?" said the captain. Then the purser told him that Thompson's messmates, in preparing him last night for interment, had found a little bag round his neck, and inside it a medal of the Humane Society, and a slip of paper written on in a lady's hand; then they had sent for him, and he had seen at once that this was a mysterious case: this lady spoke of him as her husband, and skipper of a merchant vessel.

"What is that?" roared the captain, who hitherto had listened with scarce half an ear.

"Skipper of a merchant vessel, sir, as sure as you command Her Majesty's frigate Vulture; and then we found his shirt marked with the same name as the lady's."

"What was the lady's name?"

"Lucy Dodd; and David Dodd is on the shirt."

"Why didn't you tell me this before?" cried the captain.

"Didn't know it till last night."

"Why, it is twelve o'clock. They are burying him."

"Yes, sir."

"Lucy would never forgive me," cried the captain. And to the purser's utter amazement, he clapped on his cocked hat, and flew out of the cabin on the errand I have described.

He now returned to the cabin and looked; a glance was enough: there lay the kindly face that had been his friend, man and boy.

He hid his own with his hands, and moaned. He cursed his own blindness and stupidity in not recognizing that face among a thousand. In this he was unjust to himself. David had never looked *himself* till now.

He sent for the surgeon, and told him the whole sad story; and asked him what could be done. His poor cousin Lucy had more than once expressed her horror of interment at sea. "It is very hot," said he, "but surely you must know some way of keeping him till we land in New Zealand. Curse these flies! how they bite."

The surgeon's eyes sparkled; he happened to be an enthusiast in the art of embalming. "Keep him to New Zealand!" said he, contemptuously, "I'll embalm him so that he shall go to England looking just as he does now — by-the-by, I never saw a drowned man keep his color so well before — ay, and two thousand years after that, if you don't mind the expense."

"The expense! I don't care if it costs me a year's pay. I think of nothing but repairing my blunder as far as I can."

The surgeon was delighted. Standing over his subject, who lay on the captain's table, he told that officer how he should proceed. "I have all the syringes," he said; "a capital collection. I shall inject the veins with care and patience; then I shall remove the brain and the viscera, and provided I'm not stinted in arsenic and spices"—

"I give you *carte blanche* on the purser; make your preparations, and send for him. Don't tell me how you do it; but do it. I must write and tell poor Lucy I have got him, and am bringing him home to her — dead."

The surgeon was gone about a quarter of an hour; he then returned with two men to remove the body, and found the captain still writing his letter, very sorrowful, but now and then slapping his face or leg with a hearty curse as the flies stung him.

The surgeon beckoned the men in softly, and pointed to the body, for them to carry it out.

Now, as he pointed, his eye, following his finger, fell on something that struck that experienced eye as incredible; he uttered an exclamation of astonishment so loud that the captain looked up directly from his letter, and saw him standing with his finger pointing at the corpse and his eyes staring astonishment. "What now?" said the captain, and rose from his seat.

"Look! look! look!"

The captain came and looked, and said he saw nothing at all.

"The fly! the fly!" cried the surgeon.

"Yes, I see one of them has been biting him, for there's a little blood trickling. Poor fellow!"

"A dead man can't bleed from the small veins in his skin," said the man of art. "He is alive, captain, he is

alive, as sure as we stand here and God's above. That little insect was wiser than us; he is alive."

"Jackson, don't trifle with me, or I'll hang you at the yard-arm. God bless you, Jackson! Is it really possible? Run, some of you, get a mirror; I have heard that is a test."

"Mirror be hanged! Doctor Fly knows his business."

All was now flutter and bustle; and various attempts were made to resuscitate David, but all in vain. At last the surgeon had an idea. "This man was never drowned at all," said he; "I am sure of it. This is catalepsy. He may lie this way for a week, but dead he is not. I'll try the douche." David was then by his orders stripped and carried to a place where they could turn a watercock on him from a height; and the surgeon had soon the happiness of pointing out to the captain a slight blush on David's skin in parts, caused by the falling water. All doubts ceased with this; the only fear was lest they should shake out the trembling life by rough usage. They laid him on his stomach, and with a bellows and pipe so acted on the lungs, that at last a genuine sigh issued from the patient's breast. Then they put him in a warm bed and applied stimulants; and by slow degrees the eyelids began to wink, the eyes to look more mellow, the respiration to strengthen, the heart to beat. "Patience, now," said the surgeon, "patience, and lots of air."

Patience was rewarded. Just four hours after the first treatment, a voice, faint but calm and genial, issued from the bed on their astonished ears: "Good-morning to you all."

They kept very quiet. In about five minutes more the voice broke out again, calm and sonorous: —

"Where is my money? my fourteen thousand pounds."

These words set them all looking at one another, and

very much puzzled the surgeon; they were delivered with such sobriety and conviction. "Captain," he whispered, "ask him if he knows you."

"David," said the captain, kindly, "do you know me?"

David looked at him earnestly, and his old kindly smile broke out. "Know ye, ye dog," said he, "why, you are my cousin Reginald. And how came you into this thundering bank? I hope you have got no money here. Ware land-sharks!"

"We are not in a bank, David; we are on board my ship."

"The deuce we are. But where's my money?"

"Oh, we'll talk about that by-and-by."

The surgeon stepped forward, and said, soothingly, "You have been very ill, sir. You have had a fit."

"I believe you are right," said David, thoughtfully.

"Will you allow me to examine your eye?"

"Certainly, doctor."

The surgeon examined David's eye with his thumb and finger; and then looked into it to see how the pupil dilated and contracted.

He rubbed his hands after this examination; "More good news, captain!" then, lowering his voice, "*Your friend is as sane as I am.*"

The surgeon was right. A shock had brought back the reason a shock had taken away. But how or why, I know no more than the child unborn. The surgeon wrote a learned paper, and explained the whole most ingeniously. I don't believe one word of his explanation, and can't better it; so confine myself to the phenomena. Being now sane, the boundary wall of his memory was shifted. He remembered his whole life up to his demanding his cash back of Richard Hardie; and there his reawakened mind stopped dead short. Being asked if he knew William Thompson, he said, "Yes, perfectly.

He was a foretopman on board the Agra, and rather a smart hand. The ship was aground and breaking up: he went out to sea on a piano; but we cut the hawser as he drifted under, and he got safe ashore." David's recovered reason rejected with contempt as an idle dream all that had happened while that reason was in defect. The last phenomena I have to record were bodily; one was noted by Mr. Georgie White in these terms: "Billy's eyes used to be like a seal's; but now he is a great gentleman, they are like yours and mine." The other was more singular; with his recovered reason came his first gray hair, and in one fortnight it was all as white as snow.

He remained a fortnight on board the Vulture, beloved by high and low. He walked the quarter-deck in the dress of a private gentleman, but looking like an admiral. The sailors touched their hats to him with a strange mixture of veneration and jocoseness. They called him among themselves Commodore Billy. He was supplied with funds by Reginald, and put on board a merchant ship bound for England. He landed, and went straight to Barkington. There he heard his family were in London. He came back to London, and sought them; a friend told him of Green; he went to him, and of course Green saw directly who he was. But able men don't cut business short; he gravely accepted David's commission to find him Mrs. Dodd. Finding him so confident, David asked him if he thought he could find Richard Hardie, or his clerk, Noah Skinner; both of whom had levanted from Barkington. Green, who was on a hot scent as to Skinner, demurely accepted both commissions, and appointed David to meet him at a certain place at six.

He came; he found Green's man, who took him upstairs, and there was that excited group determining the ownership of his receipt.

Now to David that receipt was a thing of yesterday. "It is mine," said he. They all turned to look at this man, with sober, passionless voice, and hair of snow. A keen cry from Julia's heart made every heart there quiver, and in a moment she was clinging and sobbing on her father's neck. Edward could only get his hand and press and kiss it. Instinct told them Heaven had given them their father back, mind and all.

Ere the joy and the emotion had calmed themselves, Alfred Hardie slipped out and ran like a deer to Pembroke Street.

Those who were so strangely reunited could not part for a long time, even to go down the stairs one by one.

David was the first to recover his composure; indeed, great tranquillity of spirit had ever since his cure been a remarkable characteristic of this man's nature. His passing mania seemed to have burnt out all his impetuosity, leaving him singularly sober, calm, and self-governed.

Mr. Compton took the money and the will, and promised the executrix, Skinner should be decently interred, and all his debts paid out of the estate. He would look in at 66 by-and-by.

And now a happy party wended their way towards Pembroke Street.

But Alfred was beforehand with them; he went boldly up the stairs, and actually surprised Mrs. Dodd and Sampson together.

At sight of him she rose, made him a low courtesy, and beat a retreat. He whipped to the door, and set his back against it. "No," said he, saucily.

She drew up majestically, and the color mounted in her pale face. "What, sir, would you detain me by force?"

"And no mistake," said the audacious boy. "How else can I detain you? when you hate me so?" She

began to peep into his sparkling eyes to see the reason of this strange conduct.

"C'way from the door, ye vagabin," said Sampson.

"No, no, my friend," said Mrs. Dodd, trembling, and still peering into his sparkling eyes. "Mr. Alfred Hardie is a gentleman at all events; he would not take such a liberty with me, unless he had some excuse for it."

"You are wonderfully shrewd, mamma," said Alfred, admiringly. "The excuse is, I don't hate you as you hate me; and I am very happy."

"Why do you call me mamma to-day? O doctor, he calls me mamma!"

"Th' audacious vagabin."

"No, no, I cannot think he would call me that unless he had some good news for us both."

"What good news can he have, except that his trile is goin' well? and you don't care for that."

"Oh, how can you say so? I care for all that concerns him; he would not come here to insult my misery with his happiness. He is noble, he is generous, with all his faults. How dare you call me mamma, sir! Call it me again, my dear child; because then I shall *know* you are come to save my heart from breaking." And with this, the truth must be told, the stately Mrs. Dodd did fawn upon Alfred with palms outstretched and piteous eyes, and certain cajoling arts of her sex.

"Give me a kiss then, mamma," said the impudent boy, "and I *will* tell you a little bit of good news."

She bowed her stately head directly, and paid the required tribute with servile humility and readiness.

"Well, then," said Alfred, and was just going to tell her all, but caught sight of Sampson, making the most expressive pantomime to him to be cautious. "Well," said he, "I have seen a sailor."

"Ah!"

"And he is sure Mr. Dodd is alive."

Mrs. Dodd lifted her hands to heaven, but could not speak. "In fact," said Alfred, hesitating (for he was a wretched hand at a fib), "he saw him not a fortnight ago on board ship. But that is not all, mamma; the sailor says he has his reason."

Mrs. Dodd sank on her knees, and said no word to man, but many to the Giver of all good. When she arose, she said to Alfred, "Bring this sailor to me. I must speak with him directly."

Alfred colored. "I don't know where to find him just now."

"Oh, indeed," said Mrs. Dodd, quietly; and this excited her suspicion; and from that moment the cunning creature lay in wait for Master Alfred. She plied him with questions, and he got more and more puzzled how to sustain his story. At last, by way of bursting out of his own net, he said, "But I am sorry to say his hair has turned white. But perhaps you won't mind that."

"And he hadn't a gray hair."

"It is not gray, like the doctor's; it is white as the driven snow."

Mrs. Dodd sighed; then, suddenly turning on Alfred, asked him, "Did the sailor tell you that?"

He hesitated a moment, and was lost.

"You have seen him," she screamed; "he is in London; he is in the house. I feel him near me;" and she went into something very like hysterics. Alfred was alarmed, and whispered the truth. The doctor sent him off to meet them, and recommended caution; her nerves were in such a state, a violent shock, even of happiness, might kill her.

Thus warned, Julia came into the room alone, and

while Dr. Sampson was inculcating self-restraint for her own sake, she listened with a superior smile, and took quite a different line. "Mamma," said she, "he is in the town, but I dare not bring him here till you are composed; his reason is restored; but his nerves are not so strong as they were; now, if you agitate yourself you will agitate him, and will do him a serious mischief."

This crafty speech produced an incredible effect on Mrs. Dodd. It calmed her directly; or rather, her great love gave her strength to be calm. "I will not be such a wretch," she said. "See; I am composed, quite composed. Bring me my darling, and you shall see how good I will be; there now, Julia, see how calm I am, quite calm. What, have I borne so much misery, with Heaven's help, and do you think I cannot bear this great happiness for my dear darling's sake?"

On this they proposed she should retire to her room, and they would go for David.

"Think over the meeting, dear, dear mamma," said Julia, "and then you will behave well for his sake, who was lost to us and is found."

Husband and wife met alone in Mrs. Dodd's room. No eye, even of the children, ventured to witness a scene so strange, so sacred. We may try and imagine that meeting; but few of us can conceive it by the light of our narrow experience. Yet one or two there may be; the world is wide, and the adventures and emotions of our race are many.

One by one all were had up to that sacred room to talk to the happy pair. They found David seated calmly at his wife's feet, her soft hand laid on his white hair, lest he should leave her again; and they told him all the sorrow behind them; and he, genial and kindly as ever, told them all the happiness before them. He spoke like the master of the house, the father of the family, the friend of them all.

But with all his goodness he was sternly resolved to have his fourteen thousand pounds out of Richard Hardie. He had an interview with Mr. Compton that very night, and the lawyer wrote a letter to Mr. Hardie, saying nothing about the death of Skinner, but notifying that his client, Captain Dodd, had recovered from Noah Skinner the receipt No. 17 for £14,010 12*s.* 6*d.*, and he was instructed to sue for it unless repaid immediately. He added Captain Dodd was mercifully restored, and remembered distinctly every particular of the transaction.

They all thought in their innocence that Hardie *vs.* Hardie was now at an end. Captain Dodd could prove Alfred's *soi-disant* illusion to be the simple truth. But Compton thought that this evidence had come too late. "What, may we not get up and say here *is* papa, and it is all true?" cried Julia, indignant.

"No, Miss Dodd; our case is closed. And take my advice; don't subject your father to the agitation of a trial. We can do without him."

Well, then, they would all go as spectators, and pray that justice might prevail.

They did go; and all sat together to hear a matter puzzled over, which, had David come one day earlier, he would have set at rest forever.

Dick Absolom was put in to prove that Alfred had put two sovereigns on the stumps for him to bowl if he could; and after him the defendant, Mr. Thomas Hardie, a mild, benevolent, weak gentleman, was put into the box, and swore the boy's father had come to him with story after story of the plaintiff's madness, and the trouble it would get him into; and so he had done for the best. His simplicity was manifest, and Saunders worked it ably. When Colt got hold of him, and badgered him, he showed something more than simplicity.

He stuttered, he contradicted himself, he perspired, he all but wept.

Colt. Are you sure you had no spite against him?

Defendant. No.

Colt. You are not sure, eh?

This candid interpretation of his words knocked the defendant stupid. He made no reply, but looked utterly flabbergasted.

Colt. Did he not provoke you? Did he not call you an idiot?

Defendant. He might.

Colt (satirically). Of course he might. (Laughter.) But did he?

Defendant (plucking up a little spirit). No. He called me SOFT TOMMY.

This revelation, and the singular appropriateness of the nickname, were so highly relished by an intelligent audience, that it was a long time before the trial could go on for roars. The plaintiff's ringing laugh was heard among the rest.

The cross-examination proceeded in this style till the defendant began to drivel at the mouth a little. At last, after a struggle, he said, with a piteous whine, that he could not help it: he hated signing his name; some mischief always came of it; but this time he had no option.

"No option?" said Colt. "What do you mean?"

And with one or two more turns of the screw, out came this astounding revelation:—

"Richard said if I didn't put Taff in one, *he* would put *me* in one."

The Judge. In one what?

Defendant (weeping). In one madhouse, my lord.

A peal followed this announcement, and Colt sat down grinning. Saunders rose smiling. "I am much obliged

to the learned counsel for making my case," said he: "I need not prolong the sufferings of the innocent. You can go down, Mr. Hardie."

The Judge. Have you any defence to this action?

"Certainly, my lord."

"Do you call Richard Hardie?"

"No, my lord."

"Then had you not better confine yourself to the question of damages?"

The sturdy Saunders would not take the hint: he replied upon the whole case, and fought hard for a verdict. The line he took was bold: he described Richard Hardie as a man who had acquired a complete power over his weaker brother: and had not only persuaded him by statements, but even compelled him by threats, to do what he believed would be the salvation of his nephew. "Will you imitate the learned counsel's cruelty? Will you strike a child?" In short, he made a powerful appeal to their pity, while pretending to address their judgments.

Then Colt rose like a tower, and, assuming the verdict as certain, asked the jury for heavy damages. He contrasted powerfully the defendant's paltry claim to pity with the anguish the plaintiff had undergone. He drew the wedding-party, the insult to the bride, the despair of the kidnapped bridegroom; he lashed the whole gang of conspirators concerned in the crime, regretted that they could only make one of all these villains smart, but hinted that Richard and Thomas Hardie were in one boat, and that heavy damages inflicted on Thomas would find the darker culprit out. He rapped out Mr. Cowper's lines on liberty, and they were new to the jury, though probably not to you: he warned the jury that all our liberties depended on *them*. "In vain," said he, "have we beheaded one tyrant, and banished another, to secure those liberties,

if men are to be allowed to send away their own flesh and blood into the worst of all prisons for life, and not smart for it, in those lamentably few cases in which the law finds them out and lays hold of them." But it would task my abilities to the utmost, and occupy more time than is left me, to do anything like justice to the fluent, fiery eloquence of Colt, Q. C., when he got a great chance like this. *Tonat, fulgurat, et rapidis eloquentiæ fluctibus cuncta proruit et proturbat.* Bursts of applause, that neither crier nor judge could suppress, bore witness to the deep indignation Britons feel when their hard-earned liberties are tampered with by power or fraud, in defiance of law; and, when he sat down, the jury were ready to fly out at him with five thousand pounds in hand.

Then rose the passionless voice of "justice according to law." I wish I could give you the very words. The following is the effect as *I* understood it. Lawyers, forgive my deficiencies.

"This is an important, but not a difficult case. The plaintiff sues the defendant under *the Law of England* for falsely imprisoning him in a madhouse. The imprisonment is admitted, and the sufferings of the plaintiff not disputed. The question is, whether he was insane at the time of the act? Now, I must tell you, that in a case of this kind, it lies upon the defendant to prove the plaintiff's insanity, rather than on the plaintiff to prove his own sanity. Has the defendant overcome this difficulty? Illusion is the best proof of insanity: and a serious endeavor was certainly made to fasten an illusion on the plaintiff about a sum of fourteen thousand pounds. But the proof was weak, and went partly on an assumption that all error is hallucination: this is illusory, and would, if acted on, set one-half the kingdom imprisoning the other half; and after all, they did not demonstrate that the plaintiff was *in error*. They advanced no *unde-*

niable proof that Mr. Richard Hardie has not embezzled this fourteen thousand pounds. I don't say it was proved on the other hand that he did embezzle that sum. Richard Hardie suing Alfred Hardie for libel on this evidence might possibly obtain a verdict: for then the burden of proof would lie on Alfred Hardie: but here it lies on those who say he is insane. The fact appears to be that the plaintiff imbibed a reasonable suspicion of his own father's integrity; it was a suspicion founded on evidence, imperfect, indeed, but of a sound character as far as it went. There had been a letter from Captain Dodd to his family, announcing his return with fourteen thousand pounds upon him, and, while as yet unaware of this letter, the plaintiff heard David Dodd accuse Richard Hardie of possessing improperly fourteen thousand pounds, the identical sum. At least, he swears to this, and as Richard Hardie was not called to contradict him, you are at liberty to suppose that Richard Hardie had some difficulty in contradicting him on oath. Here, then, true or false, was a rational suspicion, and every man has a right to a rational suspicion of his neighbor, and even to utter it within due limits: and, if he overstep those, the party slandered has his legal remedy; but, if he omits his legal remedy, and makes an attempt of doubtful legality not to confute, but to stifle, the voice of reasonable suspicion, shrewd men will suspect all the more. But then comes a distinct and respectable kind of evidence for the defendant; he urges that the plaintiff was going to sign away his property to his wife's relations. Now, this was proved, and a draft of the deed put in and sworn to. This taken singly has a very extraordinary look. Still, you must consider the plaintiff's reasonable suspicion that money belonging to the Dodds had passed irregularly to the Hardies, and then the wonder is diminished. Young and noble minds have in

every age done generous, self-denying, and delicate acts. The older we get, the less likely we are to be incarcerated for a crime of this character; but we are not to imprison youth and chivalry merely because we have outgrown them. To go from particulars to generals, the defendant, on whom the proof lies, has advanced hearsay and conjecture and not put their originators into the box. The plaintiff, on whom the proof does not lie, has advanced abundant evidence that he was sane at the time of his incarceration: this was proved to demonstration by friends, strangers, and by himself." Here the judge analyzed the testimony of several of the plaintiff's witnesses.

"As to the parties themselves, it is curious how they impersonated, so to speak, their respective lines of argument. The representative of evidence and sound reasoning, though accused of insanity, was precise, frank, rational, and dignified in the witness-box; and I think you must have noticed his good temper. The party who relied on hearsay and conjecture, was as feeble as they are; he was almost imbecile, as you observed; and, looking at both parties, it really seems monstrous that the plaintiff should be the one confined as a lunatic, and the defendant allowed to run wild and lock up his in tellectual superiors. If he means to lock them *all* up, even you and I are hardly safe. (Laughter.) The only serious question, I apprehend, is on what basis the damages ought to be assessed. The plaintiff's counsel has made a powerful appeal to your passions, and calls for vengeance. Now I must tell you you have no right to make yourselves ministers of vengeance, nor even to punish the defendant, in a suit of the kind: still less ought you to strike the defendant harder than you otherwise would — in the vague hope of punishing indirectly the true mover of the defendant and the other puppets.

I must warn you against that suggestion of the learned counsel's. If the plaintiff wants vengeance, the criminal law offers it. He comes *here*, not for vengeance, but for compensation, and restoration to that society which he is every way fitted to adorn. More than this — and all our sympathies — it is not for us to give him. But then the defendant's counsel went too far the other way; his client, he says, is next door to an idiot, and so, forsooth, his purse must be spared entirely. This is all very well if it could be done without ignoring the plaintiff, and his just claim to compensation. Why, if the defendant, instead of being weak-minded, were an idiot, or a lunatic, it would protect him from punishment as a felon, but not from damages in a suit. A sane man is not to be falsely imprisoned by a lunatic without full compensation from the lunatic or his estate: *à fortiori*, he is not to be so imprisoned by a mere fool without just compensation. Supposing your verdict then to be for the plaintiff, I think vindictive damages would be unfair on this feeble defendant, who has acted recklessly, but under an error, and without malice, or bad faith. On the other hand, nominal or even unsubstantial damages would be unjust to the plaintiff; and perhaps leave in some minds a doubt I think you do not yourselves entertain, as to the plaintiff's perfect sanity during the whole period of his life."

As soon as his lordship had ended, the foreman of the jury said their minds were quite made up long ago.

Si—lence in the court!

We find for the plaintiff, with damages, three thousand pounds.

The verdict was received with some surprise by the judge, and all the lawyers except Mr. Colt, and by the people with acclamation; in the midst of which Mr. Colt announced that the plaintiff had just gained his first-class at Oxford. "I wish him joy," said the judge.

CHAPTER XXII.

The verdict was a thunderclap to Richard Hardie; he had promised Thomas to bear him blameless. The Old Turks, into which he had bought at 72, were down to 71, and that implied a loss of five thousand pounds. On the top of all this came Mr. Compton's letter neatly copied by Colls: Richard Hardie was doubly and trebly ruined.

Then in his despair and hate he determined to baffle them all, ay, and sting the hearts of some of them once more.

He would give Peggy his last shilling; write a line to Alfred, another to Julia, assuring them he had no money, and they had killed him. And with that leave them both the solemn curse of a dying father, and then kill himself.

Not to be interrupted in his plan, he temporized with Mr. Compton; wrote that, if the receipt was really signed by his agent, of course the loss must fall on him; it was a large sum, but he would sell out and do his best, in ten days from date. With this he went and bought a pistol, and at several chemists' shops a little essential oil of almonds: his plan was to take the poison, and, if it killed without pain, well and good; but if it tortured him, then he would blow his brains out at once.

He soon arranged his worldly affairs, and next day gave Peggy his five hundred pounds, and told her she had better keep it for fear he should be arrested. He sent her on an errand to the other part of the town: then with his poison and the pistol before him on the table,

wrote a brief but emphatic curse for his son, and Julia; and a line to Peggy to thank her for her fidelity to one so much older than herself, and to advise her to take a tobacconist's shop with his money: when he had done all this, he poured out the fragrant poison and tasted it.

Ere he could drink it, one of those quidnuncs, who are always interrupting a gentleman when he has important business on hand, came running in with all manner of small intelligence. Mr. Hardie put down the glass, and gave him short, sullen answers, in hopes he would then go away and let him proceed to business. And at last his visitor did rise and go. Mr. Hardie sat down with a sigh of relief to his fragrant beverage.

Doesn't the door open, and this bore poke in his head: "Oh, I forgot to tell you: the Old Turks are going up to-day like a shot." And with this he slammed the door again, and was off.

At this the cup began to tremble in the resolute wretch's hand. The Old Turks going up! He poured the poison back into the phial, and put it and the pistol and all the letters carefully into his pocket, and took a cab to the city.

The report was true; there was an extraordinary movement in the Old Turks. The sultan was about to pay a portion of this loan, being at six per cent; this had transpired, and at four o'clock the Turks were quoted at 73. Mr. Hardie returned a gainer of five thousand pounds instead of a loser. He locked up the means of death for the present.

And now an ordinary man would have sold out, and got clear of the fatal trap: but this was not an ordinary man: he would not sell a share that day. In the afternoon they rose to 74. He came home, unloaded his pistol, and made himself some brandy and water, and with a grim smile, flavored it with a few drops of the

poison — that was a delicious tumbler. The Turks went up, up, up, to 82. Then he sold out, and cleared forty-nine thousand pounds, and all in about ten days.

With this revived the habits of his youth; no more cheating; nothing could excuse that but the dread of poverty. He went to his appointment with Mr. Compton, asked to see the receipt, said, "Yes, that was his form, and Skinner's handwriting; he had never personally received one farthing of the money; Skinner had clearly embezzled it, but that did not matter: of course Captain Dodd must not lose his money. Send your bill of costs in Hardie *vs.* Hardie to *me*, Mr. Compton," said he; "they shall not be taxed: you have lost enough by me already."

There was an air of dignity and good faith about the man that half imposed even on Compton. And when Mr. Hardie drew out the notes and said, "I should be grateful if you would forgive me the interest; but for a great piece of good-fortune on the Stock Exchange, I could never have paid the whole principal," — he said, warmly, "The interest should never be demanded through *him*."

He called in Colls, delivered up the receipt, and received the £14,010. 12*s.* 6*d.* from Mr. Hardie.

O immortal cash! You, like your great inventor, have been a kind of spirit as well as a body; and on this, not on your grosser part, depends your personal identity. So long as that survives, your body may be recalled to its lawful owner from Heaven knows where.

Mr. Compton rushed to Pembroke Street and put this hard, hard cash in David's Dodd's hands once more.

Love and constancy had triumphed, and Julia and Alfred were to be married and go down to Albion Villa to prepare it for the whole party, tenants no more:

Alfred had bought it. The Commissioners of Lunacy had protected his twenty thousand pounds zealously from the first, and his trustees had now paid the money over.

Alfred, consulted by Mrs. Dodd, whose pet of pets he now was, as to the guests to be asked to the wedding-breakfast, suggested, "None but the tried friends of our adversity."

"What an excellent idea!" said Mrs. Dodd, naïvely.

Dr. Sampson being duly invited asked if he should bring his emulsion.

This proposal puzzled all but Mrs. Dodd. She was found laughing heartily in a corner without any sound of laughter. Being detected and pointed out by Julia, she said, with a little crow, "He means his wife. Yes, certainly, bring your emulcent" — pretending he had used that more elegant word — "and then they will all see how well you can behave."

Accordingly he brought a lady, who was absurdly pretty to be the mother of several grown young ladies and gentlemen, and two shades more quiet and placid than Mrs. Dodd. She quietly had her chair placed by Dr. Sampson's, and, whenever he got racy, she put a hand gently on his shoulder, and by some mesmeric effect it moderated him as Neptune did the waves in the Æneid. She was such a mistress of this mesmeric art, that she carried on a perfect conversation with her other neighbor, yet modulated her lion lord with a touch of that composing hand, in a parenthetical manner, and even while looking another way.

This hand, soft as down, yet irresistible, suppressed the great art of healing, vital chronometry, the wrongs of inventors, the collusions of medicine, the Mad Ox, and all but drawing-room topics, at the very first symptom, and only just allowed the doctor to be the life and soul of the party.

Julia and Mrs. Dodd had a good cry at parting. Of course Alfred consoled them; reminded them it was only for a week, and carried off his lovely prize, who in the carriage soon dried her eyes upon his shoulder.

Then she applied to her new lord and master for information. "They *say* that you and me are one now," said she, interrogatively.

He told her triumphantly it was so.

"At that rate you are Julius and I am Elfrida," said she.

"That is a bargain," said he, and sealed it on the sweet lips that were murmuring heaven so near him.

In this sore-tried and now happy pair the ardor of possession lasted long, and was succeeded by the sober but full felicity of conjugal love and high esteem combined. They were so young and elastic, that past sorrows seemed but to give one zest more to the great draught of happiness they now drank day by day. They all lived together at Albion Villa, thanks to Alfred. He was by nature combative, and his warlike soul was roused at the current theory that you cannot be happy under the same roof with your wife's mother. "That is cant," said he, to Mrs. Dodd; "let us, you and I, trample on it hand in hand."

"My child," said poor Mrs. Dodd, sorrowfully, "I am a poor hand at trampling; and everybody says a mother-in-law in the house bores a young gentleman sadly."

"If a young gentleman can't live happy with *you*, mamma," said he, kissing her, "he is a little snob, that is all, and not fit to live at all. *Delenda est Cantilena!* That means 'Down with cant!'"

They did live together: and behold eleven French plays, with their thirty-three English adaptations, confuted to the end of time.

Creatures so high-bred as Mrs. Dodd never fidget one.

There is a repose about them; they are balm to all those they love, and blister to none. Item: no stranger could tell by Mrs. Dodd's manner whether Edward or Alfred was her own son.

Oh, you happy little villa! you were as like paradise as any mortal dwelling can be. A day came, however, when your walls could no longer hold all the happy inmates. Julia presented Alfred with a lovely boy; enter nurses, and the villa showed symptoms of bursting. Two months more, and Alfred and his wife and boy overflowed into the next villa. It was but twenty yards off, and there was a double reason for the migration. As often happens after a long separation, Heaven bestowed on Captain and Mrs. Dodd another infant to play about their knees at present, and help them grow younger instead of older, for tender parents begin life again with their children.

The boys were nearly of a size, though the nephew was a month or two older than his uncle, a relationship that was early impressed on their young minds, and caused those who heard their prattle many a hearty laugh.

"Mrs. Dodd," said a lady, "I couldn't tell by your manner which is yours and which is your daughter's."

"Why, they are both mine," said Mrs. Dodd, piteously, and opening her eyes with gentle astonishment.

As years rolled on, Dr. Sampson made many converts at home and abroad. The foreign ones acknowledged their obligations. The leading London physicians managed more skilfully; they came into his ideas, and bit by bit reversed their whole practice, and, twenty years after Sampson, began to strengthen the invalid at once, instead of first prostrating him, and so causing either long sickness or sudden death. But, with all this, they disowned their forerunner, and still called him a quack

while adopting his quackery. This dishonesty led them into difficulties. To hide that their whole practice in medicine was reversed on *better information*, they went from shuffle to shuffle, till at last they reached this climax of fatuity and egotism — THE TYPE OF DISEASE IS CHANGED.

Natura mutatur, non nos mutamur.

Oh, mutable nature and immutable doctors!

Oh, unstable omniscience, and infallible nescience!

The former may err; the latter never — in its own opinion.

At this rate, draining the weak of their life-blood was the right thing in Cervantes' day: and, when he observed that it killed men like sheep, and said so under the head of Sangrado, he was confounding his own age with an age to come three hundred years later, in which coming age depletion was *going* to be wrong.

Molière — in lashing the whole scholastic system of lancet, purge, and blister, as one of slaughter — committed the same error: mistook his century for one to come.

And Sampson, thirty years ago, sang the same tune, and mistook his inflammatory generation for the cool generation as yet unborn. In short, it is the characteristic of a certain blunder called genius to see things too far in advance. The surest way to avoid this is not to see them at all; but go blindly by the cant of the hour. *Race moutonnière, va!*

Sampson was indignant at finding that these gentry, after denouncing him for years as a quack, were pilfering his system, yet still reviling him. He went in a towering passion, and lashed them by tongue and pen: told them they were his subtractors now as well as detractors, asked them how it happened that in countries

where there is no Sampson the type of disease remains unchanged, depletion is the practice and death the result, as it was in every age?

No man, however stout, can help being deeply wounded when he sees his ideas stolen, yet their author and publisher disowned. Many men's hearts have been broken by this: but I doubt whether they were really great men.

Don't tell me Lilliput ever really kills Brobdignag. Except of course when Brobdignag takes medical advice of Lilliput.

Dr. Sampson had three shields against subtraction, detraction, and all the wrongs inventors endure; to wit, a choleric temper, a keen sense of humor, and a good wife. He storms and rages at his detracting pupils; but ends with roars of laughter at their impudence. I am told he still hopes to meet with justice some day, and, to give justice a chance, he goes to bed at ten, for, says he, —

> "Jinny us, jinny us,
> Take care of your carcass," —

and explains that no genius ever lived to ninety without being appreciated.

"If Chatterton and Keats had attended to this they would have been all right. If James Watt had died at fifty he would have been all wrong; for at fifty he was a failure: so was the painter Etty, th' English Tishin." And then he accumulates examples.

His last distich bearing on Hard Cash is worth recording. "Miss Julee," said he, "y' are goen to maerry int' a strange family —

> "Where th' ijjit puts the jinnyus
> In-til a madhus,"

which, like most of the droll things this man said, was

true: for Soft Tommy and Alfred were the two intellectual extremes of the whole tribe of Hardies.

Mrs. Archbold, disappointed both in love and revenge, reposed her understanding, and soothed her mind, with Frank Beverley and opium. This soon made the former deep in love with her, and his intellect grew by contact with hers. But one day news came from Australia that her husband was dead. Now, perhaps I shall surprise the reader if I tell him that this Edith Archbold began her wedded life a good, confiding, loving, faithful woman. Yet so it was: the unutterable blackguard she had married, he it was who labored to spoil her character, and succeeded at last, and drove her, unwilling at first, to other men. The news of his death was like a shower-bath; it roused her. She took counsel with herself, and hope revived in her strong head and miserable heart. She told Frank, and watched him like a hawk. He instantly fell on his knees, and implored her to marry him directly. She gave him her hand and turned away, and shed the most womanly tear that had blessed her for years. "I am not mad, you know," said poor Frank; "I am only a bit of a muff." To make a long story short, she exerted all her intelligence, and with her help Frank took measures towards superseding his Commission of Lunacy. Now, in such a case, the Lord Chancellor always examines the patient in person. What was the consequence? Instead of the vicarious old Wolf, who had been devouring him at third and fourth hand, Frank had two interviews with the Chancellor himself: a learned, grave, upright gentleman, who questioned him kindly and shrewdly; and finding him to be a young man of small intellectual grasp, but not the least idiotic or mad, superseded his commission in defiance of his greedy kinsfolk, and handed him his property. He married Edith Archbold, and she made him as happy

as the day was long. For the first year or two she treated his adoration with good-natured contempt; but, as years rolled on, she became more loving, and he more knowing. They are now a happy pair, and all between her first honest love, and this her last, seems to her a dream.

So you see a female rake can be ameliorated by a loving husband, as well as a male rake by a loving wife.

It sounds absurd, and will offend my female readers and their unchristian prejudices, but that black-browed jade is like to be one of the best wives and mothers in England. But then, mind you, she had always — brains.

I do not exactly know why Horace puts together those two epithets "just" and "tenacious of purpose." Perhaps he had observed they go together. To be honest, I am not clear whether this is so on the grand scale. But certainly the two features did meet remarkably in one of my characters — Alfred Hardie. The day the bank broke, he had said he would pay the creditors. He now set to work to do it by degrees. He got the names and addresses, lived on half his income, and paid half away to those creditors; he even asked Julia to try and find Maxley out, and do something for him. "But don't let me see him," said he, trembling, "for I could not answer for myself." Maxley was known to be cranky, but harmless, and wandering about the country. Julia wrote to Mr. Green about him.

Alfred's was an up-hill game, but fortune favors the obstinate as well as the bold. One day, about four years after his marriage with Julia, being in London, he found a stately figure at the corner of a street, holding out his hand for alms, too dignified to ask it except by that mute and touching gesture.

It was his father.

Then, as truly noble natures must forgive the fallen,

Alfred was touched to the heart, and thought of the days of his childhood, before temptation came. "Father," said he, "have you come to this?"

"Yes, Alfred," said Richard, composedly; "I undertook too many speculations, especially in land and houses; they seemed profitable at first, too, but now I am entirely hampered; if you would but relieve me of them, and give me a guinea a week to live on, I would forgive all your disobedient conduct."

Alfred bit his lip, had a wrestle with the old Adam, and said, gently, "Come home with me, sir."

He took him to Barkington, bag and baggage, and his good Christian wife received the old man with delight; she had prayed day and night for this reconciliation. Finding his son so warm, and being himself as cool, Richard Hardie entrapped Alfred into an agreement to board and lodge him, and pay him a guinea every Saturday at noon; in return for this Alfred was to manage Richard's property, and pocket the profits, if any. Alfred assented; the old man chuckled at his son's simplicity, and made him sign a formal agreement to that effect.

This done, he used to sit brooding and miserable nearly all the week till guinea-time came, and then brightened up a bit. One day Alfred sent for an accountant to look after his father's papers, and see if matters were really desperate.

The accountant was not long at work, and told Alfred the accounts were perfectly clear, and kept in the most admirable order. "The cash balance is sixty thousand pounds," said he, "and many of the rents are due. It is an agent you want, not an accountant."

"What are you talking about? a balance of sixty thousand pounds?" Alfred was stupefied.

The accountant, however, soon convinced him by the figures it was so.

Alfred went with the good news to his father.

His father went into a passion. "That is one side of the account, ye fool," said he; "think of the rates, the taxes, the outgoings. You want to go from your bargain, and turn me on the world; but I have got you in black and white, tight, tight."

Then Alfred saw the truth, and wondered at his past obtuseness.

His father was a monomaniac.

He consulted Sampson, and Sampson told him to increase the old man's comforts on the sly, and pay him his guinea a week. "It's all you can do for him."

Then Alfred employed an agent, and received a large income from his father's land and houses, and another from his consols. The old gentleman had purchased westward of Hyde Park Square, and had bought with excellent judgment till his mind gave way. Alfred never spent a farthing of it on himself, but he took some for his father's creditors. "All justice is good," said he, "even wild justice." Some of these unhappy creditors he found in the workhouse; the Misses Lunley that survived were there, alas! He paid them their four thousand pounds, and restored them to society. The name of Hardie began to rise again from the dust.

Now, while Richard Hardie sat brooding and miserable, expecting utter ruin, and only brightening up on guinea-day, Julia had a *protégé* with equally false views but more cheerful ones. It was an old man with a silver beard, and a machine with which he stamped leather into round pieces of silver, in his opinion. Nothing could have shaken that notion out of his mind. Julia confirmed it. She let it be known that she would always cash five pieces of round leather from Mr. Matthews's mint per day, and ten on Friday, when workingmen are poorest.

She contrived this with diabolical, no, angelical cunning, to save the old man from ridicule, and to do his soul much good. All souls were dear to her. What was the consequence? He went about with his mint, and relieved poor people, and gratified his mania at the same time. His face began to beam with benevolence and innocent self-satisfaction. On Richard Hardie's all was cordage, and deep gloom sat on his ever-knitted brow.

Of these two men which was the rich man? he who had nothing, yet thought he possessed enough for himself and his neighbors, or he who rolled in wealth, but writhed under imaginary poverty?

One reflection more. Do not look to see Providence dash the cup of prosperity from every dishonest hand; or you will often be disappointed; yet this, if you look closer, you shall often see; such a man holds the glittering cup tight, and nectar to the brim; but into that cup a shadowy hand squeezes some subtle ingredient, which turns that nectar to wormwood.

Richard Hardie died, his end being hastened by fear of poverty coming like an armed man, and his guinea a week going. Matthews met with an accident, and, being impervious to pain, but subject to death, was laid beside his poor mistress in St. Anne's churchyard. Julia buried him, and had a headstone put to his grave; and, when this was done, she took her husband to see it. On that stone was fresh carved the true name of the deceased, James Maxley.

"I have done what you told me," said Julia, her sweet voice trembling a little. Even she did not quite know how her husband would take it, or bear it.

"I *know it*," said Alfred, softly. "I saw who your Matthews was; but I could not speak of him, even to you." He looked at the grave in silence.

Julia's arms were round his neck in a moment, and her wet cheek consoling his.

"You have done right, my good Christian wife. I wish I was like you. My poor little Jenny!"

Richard Hardie's papers were found in perfect order; and among them an old will leaving fourteen thousand pounds to Edward Dodd.

On this being announced to Edward, he suggested that it was a fraud; Alfred had been at him for a long time with offers of money, and failing there, and being a fine, impetuous fellow, had lost his temper and forged a will, in his, Edward's, favor.

This scandalous defence broke down. The document was indisputable, and the magic sum was forced down Master Edward's throat, nilly willy. Thus rose the Hard Cash a second time from the grave.

All this enabled the tenacious Alfred to carry out a deeply cherished design. Hardie's late bank had been made into a shop; but it belonged to Mrs. Dodd; he bought it of her, and set up the bank again, with Edward as managing partner. This just suited Edward, who sadly wanted employment. Hardie and Co. rose again, and soon wiped out the late disgraceful episode, and hooked on to the past centuries of honor and good credit. No creditor of Richard Hardie was left unpaid. Alfred went in for politics; stood for Barkington, was defeated by seventeen: took it as a matter of course; told his friends he had never succeeded in anything at first: nor been beaten in the end; stood again, and became M.P. for Barkington, whence to dislodge him I pity any one who tries.

For a long time Mrs. Dodd was nervous, and used to wake with a start at night, and put out her hand to make sure David was not lost again. But this wore off.

For years the anniversary of that fatal day when he

was brought home on the stretcher, came back to them all as a day of gloom. But that wore off.

Sometimes the happiness of her family seemed incredible to her, remembering what they had all gone through. At first, their troubles were too terrible and recent to be discussed. But even that wore off, and they could talk of it all; and things bitter at the time became pleasant to remember.

One midsummer day they had all dined together rather early at Albion Villa, and sat on the lawn with Mrs. Dodd's boy and Julia's boy and girl playing about these ladies' knees. Now after a little silence, Mrs. Dodd, who had been thinking quietly of many things, spoke to them all, and said, "If my children and I had not been bosom friends, we never should have survived that terrible time we have passed through, my dears. Make friends of your children, my child."

"Ah, that I will!" said Julia; and caught up the nearest brat and kissed it impetuously; for wifehood and maternity had not un-Julia'd her.

"It wasn't only our being friends, mamma," said Edward; "it was our sticking together so."

In looking back on the story now ended, I incline to Mrs. Dodd's conclusion. Almost my first word was that she and her children were bosom friends; and my last is to congratulate them that it was so. Think of their various trials and temptations, and imagine what would have become of them if family love and unity had not abounded. Their little house was built on the sure foundation of true family affection; and so the winds of adversity descended, and the floods came, and burst upon that house, but could not prevail against it; it was founded on a rock.

SINGLEHEART AND DOUBLEFACE.

SINGLEHEART AND DOUBLEFACE.

CHAPTER I.

Matthew Brent, a small shopkeeper in Green Street, Liverpool, was a widower with two daughters. Deborah, the elder, had plenty of tongue and mother-wit, but could not and would not study anything on earth if it had the misfortune to be written or printed. Sarah, the younger, showed attention and application from her childhood.

Her father cultivated those powers, for they are the roots of all excellence, and he knew it. He sent the girl to school, and there she learned the usual smattering; and one thing worth it all, viz., how to teach herself. Under that abler tuition she learned to write like a clerk, to keep her father's books, to remember the price of every article in the shop, to serve the customers when required, and to read for her own pleasure and instruction. At eighteen she was Brent's right hand all day, and his reader at night.

Deborah, who could only spell *The Mercury*, and would not do that if she could get Sally to read it out, found her level as cook, housekeeper, and marketwoman. At twenty she was very tall, supple, and muscular; comely, but freckled, reddish hair, a very white skin, only it tanned easily. It revealed its natural beauty in

her throat, and above all in the nape of her neck. This nape, snowy and solid, and a long row of ivory teeth, were her beauties. She married quite young, her father's cousin, a small farmer, and settled in Berkshire, her native county.

Sarah Brent was about two inches shorter than Deborah, but a finer figure; had an oval face full of modesty and gentle dignity. Her skin was also white, and revealed itself in her shapely hands as well as her alabaster throat. Her hair was brown, and so were two fearless eyes that looked at people full without staring. When she was nineteen, a worthy young fellow, called Joseph Pinder, fell in love with her and courted her. He was sheepish and distant in his approaches, for he looked on her as a superior being. She never chattered, yet could always answer civilly and wisely; this, and her Madonna-like face, made Joe Pinder reverence her. Her father thought highly of him, and connived at his visits, and so they were often seen together in a friendly way; but when he began to make downright love to her, she told him calmly she could go no farther than friendship. "And indeed," said she, "I would never leave my father for any young man."

Joseph Pinder knew that this declaration has often preceded connubial rites, and continued his friendly assiduities; and these two often came back from church together, he glowing with delight at being near her, and she cool and friendly.

The Brents were in a small way of business, and Sarah's adorer was a decorative painter, and what is called in the trade a "writer" — one of those astounding artists who by skilful shading make gilt letters appear concave, or convex, or stand out bodily from a board or wall, and blazon a shopkeeper's name and business. On one occasion he had a large job of this sort to do in

Manchester. It took him a fortnight, and led to another at Preston. In a month he came back with money in both pockets, and full of joy at the prospect of meeting Sarah again.

He found the Brents at supper, and there was a young man with them who had a deal to say, and made the old man smile, while the young woman often looked furtively at him with undisguised complacency. This was a second cousin of Mr. Brent's, one James Mansell, a painter and grainer, who had settled in the town while Pinder was away.

Pinder's heart sank at this, and instead of exerting himself in vigorous competition, he became more silent and more depressed the more James Mansell rattled away; in short, he was no company at all, because the other was good company.

After awhile he said "Good-night."

A coquette would have followed him to the door and smoothed matters; but that was not Sarah Brent's line; she said "good-night" kindly enough, but she never moved, and James Mansell's tongue resumed its headlong course.

This was the first of many such scenes. Sarah was always kind, but cool, to her old admirer, and manifestly attracted by the new one. Indeed, it came to this at last, that Pinder could never get a walk with her alone except from church.

On one occasion he ventured on a mild remonstrance: "If you had not told me you would never leave your father, I should be almost afraid *that* James Mansell would entice you away from us all."

"From everybody else; but not from father."

One would think that was plain enough, but Joe could not realize it, and he went on to ask her if she could really find it in her heart to throw such an old friend as him over for a stranger.

She replied, calmly: "Am I changed to you any way? I always respected you, and I respect you still."

"That is a comfort, Sarah. But if this goes on, I'm afraid you will like another man far better than me, whether you respect me or not."

"That is my business," said she, firmly.

"Isn't it mine, too, Sarah? We have kept company this two years."

"As friends; but nothing more. I have never misled you, but now if you are wise you will take up with some other girl. You can find as good as me."

"Not in this world."

"Nonsense, Joe; and besides" —

"Well, what?"

"I am one that forecasts a little, and I am afraid you will tease me, and pain yourself, and some day we shall part bad friends, and that would be a pity after all."

"Nothing but death shall part us."

"Yes, this door will. Father is not well to-night." The door in question was the side door of her own house.

Pinder took the hint, and bade her "good-night" affectionately.

He walked a little way out into the country by himself, wondering now whether she would ever be his. He was dejected, but not in despair. In his class of life men and women have often two or three warmish courtships before they marry. Sarah was not of that sort, but this James Mansell would be as likely as not to leave the town, and think no more of Sarah Brent. In his trade it was here to-day and there to-morrow, and he did not look like the man to cling to the absent.

Pinder returned home by Green Street to have a last look at the shell which held his pearl. As he passed by on the other side of the way, James Mansell came and knocked at Mr. Brent's side door. Pinder waited with a

certain degree of jealous malice to see him excluded. Sarah came to the door and parleyed; probably she told him her father was unwell. Pinder went on a little way, and then turned to see.

The colloquy continued. It seemed interminable. The woman he loved was in no hurry now to get back to her sick father, and when she did, what was the result? Mansell was invited in, after all, and the door of heaven closed upon him instead of in his face.

The watcher stood there transfixed with the poisoned arrow of jealousy. He was sick and furious by turns, and at last got frightened at himself, and resolved to keep out of the way of this James Mansell, with whom he had no chance, Sarah's preference was now so clear.

But he was too much in love to forego the walks from church; and Sarah never objected to his company, nor, indeed, to his coming in to supper afterward. But he was sure to find his rival there and be reduced to a sullen cipher.

So things went on. He did not see what passed between Mansell and Sarah Brent, the open wooing of the man, the timid tumult in the woman, expanding, ripening, blushing, thrilling, and blooming in the new sunshine. But he discovered a good deal: she seemed gliding gradually away from him down a gentle but inexorable slope. She was as friendly in her cool way as ever, but scarcely attended to him. Her mind seemed elsewhere at times, even in that short walk from church, sole relic now of their languid but unbroken friendship.

The time came when even this privilege was disputed. One Sunday James Mansell arrived in Green Street earlier than usual. He heard where Sarah was, so he came to meet her. She was walking with Pinder. Mansell had been drinking a little, and did not know perhaps how little cause he had for jealousy. He stepped rudely

in between Pinder and Miss Brent, and took her arm, whereas Pinder had been walking merely by her side.

"What sort of manners are these?" said Pinder.

"They are my manners," said the other haughtily. "She has no business to walk with you at all."

"Don't insult *her*, at all events. She has walked with me this two year."

"Well, then, now you go and walk with some other girl."

"Not at your bidding, you brute."

"Oh, you want a hiding, do you?"

"No: it is you that want that."

James Mansell replied by a blow, which took Pinder unawares, and sent him staggering.

He would have followed it up, but Pinder stopped the second neatly, and gave him a smart one in return, crying "Coward! to take a man unawares." Sarah was terrified, and clasped her hands. "Oh, pray do not quarrel about *me!*"

"Stand aloof," said Mansell imperiously; "this must end." Sarah obeyed the man, who was evidently her master, but implored him not to hurt Joe Pinder: he was only a friend. The truth is, Mansell had recounted such deeds of prowess that, what with his gasconades and her blind love, she thought no man could have a chance with him.

He sparred well, and hit Pinder several times, but rather short.

Both were soon infuriated, and they were all over the street, fighting and raging.

Under similar circumstances Virgil's heifer browsed the grass in undisturbed tranquillity, content to know that her mate would be the best bull of the two.

Not so Sarah Brent. She clasped her hands and screamed, and implored her hero to be merciful. Her

conscience whispered that her inoffensive friend was being hardly used in every way.

Presently her hero, after administering several blows, and making his adversary bleed, received a left-handed stinger that made him recoil. Maddened by this, he rushed at Pinder to annihilate him. But Pinder was no novice either: he drew back on the point of his toe, and met James Mansell's rush with a tremendous slogger that sounded like a falling plank, and shot him to the earth at Sarah Brent's very feet, a distance of some yards.

All was changed in a moment: she literally bounded over the prostrate form, and stood between him and danger; for in Liverpool they fight up and down, as the saying is. "You wretch!" she cried, "to kill the man I love." It was Pinder's turn to stagger before that white cheek, and those fiery eyes, and that fatal word.

"Man you love?" said he.

"I love! I love! I love!" cried she, stabbing with swift feminine instinct the monster who had struck her love.

Then Pinder fell back, subdued, with a sigh of despair; she flung herself down, and raised James Mansell's head and sobbed hysterically over it.

Some people now came up; but Pinder in those few seconds had undergone a change. He stepped forward, thrust the people away, and, kneeling down, lifted James Mansell up and took him under his arm. "Leave him to me, Sarah," said he.

"To you?" she sobbed.

"Ay: do you think I shall ever hurt him again, now you have told me you love him?" And he said it so finely she knew he meant it. Then he sent to the market public-house for a sponge and some brandy, and meantime Mansell, who was tough, came to of himself;

but the water and brandy completed his restoration to society. It was Pinder who sponged his face and nostrils, and took him to Brent's house, Sarah hovering near all the time like a hen over her chickens. She whipped into the house with her pass-key, and received her favorite at the door, then closed it gently, but decidedly; not that Joe Pinder would have come in if she had asked him. He did not even trust himself to say "good-night." It was all over between him and her, and of course he knew it.

When she had got James Mansell safe she made him lie down on the little sofa, and sat at his head, applying cool linen rags to his swollen cheeks and a cut upon his forehead due to Pinder's knuckles.

Presently her father came in from visiting a sick friend, and at sight of this group asked what was to do.

"It is that cruel Joe Pinder been beating him, father: I thought he had killed him."

"What for?"

Sarah blushed and was silent: she wouldn't own that James was the aggressor, and yet she wouldn't tell a falsehood.

"Joe Pinder!" said the old man. "He was never quarrelsome: there's not a better-hearted young man in the town, nor a more respectable. Now you tell me what was the quarrel about?"

"O father!" said Sarah deprecatingly.

"Ay! ay! I needn't ask," said the old man. "It was about a woman, eh? You might have been better employed, *all three*, this Sabbath evening."

"Well, sir, Sarah was only coming home from church this Sabbath evening," said Mansell; "but as for me, I was as much to blame as the other, so let us say no more about it." Sarah whispered, "You are very generous." The subject dropped till the old man retired to rest, and

SHE SAT IN HER FATHER'S ARM-CHAIR.

then James Mansell, who had been brooding, delivered himself thus: "He is not half a bad sort, that Joe Pinder. But he is one too many for me, or I am one too many for him, so you must make up your mind this night which is to be your husband, and give the other the sack."

This was virile, and entitled to a feminine reply. It came immediately in what, perhaps, if we could know the truth, is a formula: not a word, not even a syllable, but a white wrist passed round the neck, and a fair head deposited like down upon the shoulder of her conqueror.

Joseph Pinder grieved and watched, but troubled the lovers no more. James Mansell pressed Sarah to name the day. She objected. Her father's health was breaking, and she would not leave him. Mansell urged her: she stood firm. He accused her of not loving him: she sighed and wondered he could say that, but was immovable.

By and by it all came to her father's ears. He sent for a lawyer directly, and made the shop and house over to Sarah by deed of gift. Then he told her she need not wait for his death; he would prefer to see her happy with the man of her choice, and also to advise her in business for the little while he had to live.

So the banns were cried, and Joseph Pinder heard in silence; and in due course James Mansell was united to Sarah Brent in holy matrimony.

In its humble way this was a promising union. The man was twenty-seven, the woman twenty, and thoughtful beyond her years. They had health and love and occupation; moreover, the man's work took him out of the woman's way, except at meals, and in the evening. Now nothing sweetens married life, and divests it of monotony and *ennui*, more than these daily partings and meetings. Mansell had three trades, and in one of them,

graining, he might be called an artist. He could imitate the common woods better than almost anybody; but at satin-wood, mahogany, and American birch, he was really wonderful. Sarah was a first-rate shop-woman, civil, prompt, obliging, and handsome, — qualities that all attract in business. She gave no credit beyond a week, and took none at all.

In any class of life it is a fine thing when both spouses can contribute a share to the joint income. This is one of the boons found oftenest among the middle classes. Most laborers' wives can only keep house, and few gentlemen's wives can earn a penny.

The Mansells, then, upon a large and wide survey of life, were in a happy condition — happier far than any pair who do not earn their living.

One day a great sorrow came, but not unexpectedly. Matthew Brent died peacefully, blessing his daughters and his son-in-law.

The next day came a joyful event: Sarah's child was born — a lovely girl.

Mighty nature comforted the bereaved daughter, and soon the home was as cheerful as ever.

Indeed, it was not till the third year of her marriage that a cloud appeared, and that seemed a small one, no bigger than a man's hand.

James Mansell began to come home Saturday night instead of Saturday afternoon; and the reason was clear, he smelt of liquor, and though always sober, his speech was thick on these occasions.

Sarah, who had forecasts, was alarmed, and spoke in time. She remembered something her father, an observant man, had said to her in his day; viz., that your clever specimens of the class which may be called artist-mechanics are often addicted to liquor.

However, this prudent woman thought it best not to

raise an argument about drink; she merely represented to her husband that there was now a run upon her shop Saturday afternoon and evening, and really it was more than she could manage without his assistance; would he be so good as to help her? He assisted readily enough, and then the Saturday afternoons became her happiest time. He himself seemed to enjoy the business and the bustle and his wife's company.

But by and by he came home very late on Monday, with the usual signs of a drop; then she advised him and entreated him, but never scolded him. He acquiesced and was perfectly good-tempered, though in the wrong. But one day in the week he would come home late, and mumble what is called the Queen's English, but I believe the people hold a few shares in it. Sarah was disappointed, and a little alarmed, but began to hope it would go no farther at all events. However, one Saturday, if you please, he did not come to help her in the shop, did not even come home to supper, and she had made such a nice supper for him. She sat at the window and fretted, she went from the window to her sleeping child and back again, restless and apprehensive.

At midnight, when the whole street was still, footsteps rang on the pavement. She looked out and saw two men, each with an arm under the shoulder of a third, hoisting him along. She darted to the street-door, and received her husband from the hands of two men, who were perfectly sober. One of them turned on his heel and walked swiftly away at sight of her. But she saw him — for the first time this three years.

It was Joseph Pinder.

CHAPTER II.

Mr. Mansell began his bibulous career with a redeeming quality more common in Russia than in England — good-natured in his cups. He chuckled feebly, and opposed the inertia of matter only, whilst the dismayed wife pulled him and pushed him, and at last got him down on a little sofa in the shop-parlor. Then she whipped off his necktie, and washed his face in diluted lavender-water, and put her salts to his nose. Being now on his back, he soon went to sleep and breathed sonorously whilst she sat in her father's arm-chair and watched him bitterly and sadly.

At first his hard breathing alarmed her, and she sat waiting to avert apoplexy.

But toward morning sleep overcame her. Then daylight coming in with a shoot awakened her, and she looked round on the scene. The room in disorder, her husband sleeping off his liquor, she in her father's arm-chair, not the connubial bed.

Her first thought was, "Oh, if father could see us now this Sabbath morn!" She got up sadly, and lighted fires; then went up-stairs, washed and dressed the little girl, and made her lisp a prayer. Then, not choosing the daughter to see the father in his present condition, she went down and waked him, and made him wash his face and tidy himself. He asked for brandy; she looked him in the face and said, "No, not one drop." But he was ill and coaxed her. She gave him a tablespoonful, and then ground some coffee and gave him a cup hot and strong.

She was not a hasty woman; she showed him a face grave and sad, but she did not tell him her mind. So then he opened the subject himself.

"This will be a warning to me."

"I hope so," said she gravely.

"Can't think how I came to be overcome like that."

"By putting yourself in the way of it. If you had been helping me at the shop, that needed your help, it would have been better for you, and for me too."

"Well, I will after this. It is a warning."

She began to relent. "Well, James, if you take it to heart, I will not be too hard, for where is the sense of nagging at a man when he owns his fault? But oh, James, I am so mortified! Who do you think brought you home?" He tried to remember, but could not. "Well, one of them was the last man in Liverpool I would have to see you let yourself down so. It was Joe Pinder."

"I never noticed him. What, was he tight too?"

"No; if he had been, I wouldn't have minded so much. He was sober, and you were" —

The man did not seize the woman's sentiment. He said carelessly, "Oh, 'twas he brought me safe home, was it? He is not half a bad sort, then."

Sarah stared at this plain straightforward view of her old lover's conduct. She had a greater desire to be just than most women have, but she labored under feminine disabilities. She was silent, and weighed Mansell's view of the matter, but came back to her own. "I do hope," said she, "you will never be so overtook again — think of your child — but if you are, oh! pray don't come home on that man's arm. I'd crawl home on all fours sooner, if I was you."

"All right," said he vaguely. Then she took this opportunity to beg him to go to church with her that

morning. Hitherto he had always declined, but now he consented almost eagerly. He clutched at a compromise. He said, "Sally, them that sin must suffer." The fact is, he expected to hear his conduct denounced from the pulpit. Catch the pulpit doing anything of the kind! The pulpit is not practical, and meddles little with immorality as it is, and rarely gives ten consecutive minutes to that particular vice which overruns the land. James Mansell sat under a drizzle of thin generalities, and came home complacent.

His wife was pleased with him, and still more when he took her and Lucy for a walk in the evening, and they carried the child by turns.

After this the man kept within bounds; he soaked, but could always walk home. To be sure, he began to diffuse moderate inebriety over the whole week. This caused the good wife great distress of mind, and led to practical results that alarmed the mother and the woman of business. Mansell was still the first grainer in the place, and the tradesmen would have employed him by preference if he could have been relied on to finish his jobs. But he was so uncertain: he would go to dinner, and stop at a public-house; would appoint an hour to commence, and be at a public-house. He tired out one good customer after another. The joint income declined in consequence, and, as generally happens, their expenses increased, for Mrs. Mansell, getting no help from her husband, was obliged to take a servant.

Often in the evening she would close her shop early, leave her child under strict charge of the girl, and go to some public-house, and there coax and remonstrate, and get him away at last.

With all this, she was as true as steel to him. She never was known to admit he was a drunkard. The most she would acknowledge to angry tradesmen, and that

somewhat haughtily, was that he took a drop now and then to put away the smell of the paint.

But in private she was not so easy. She expostulated, she remonstrated, she reproached, and sometimes she lost heart and wept bitterly at his behavior.

All this had its effect. The invectives galled Mr. Mansell's vanity; the tears bored him; the total made him sullen, and alienated his affection. The injured party forgave freely; not so the wrong-doer. As he never hit her — which is a vent — this gracious person began to hate her. But her love remained as invincible as his vice.

Deborah's husband died suddenly of apoplexy. Sarah dared not go to comfort her, and would not tell the reason. She begged the mourner to come to her.

Deborah came, and the sisters rocked together, country fashion, crying; though such different characters, they had a true affection for each other.

By and by Deborah told her, with another burst of grief, her husband had left her nothing but debt. She was next door to a beggar.

"Not while I live," was the quiet reply. "Stay with me for good, that is all." The servant was discharged at Deborah's request; she said she must work hard or die of grief. Accordingly she went about crying, but working, and all steel things began to shine and the brass to glitter, because there was a bereaved widow in the house.

This was a great comfort in every way to Sarah; she could leave the house with more confidence when her beloved had to be dragged away from liquid ruin, and also it did her good to sympathize with her bereaved sister. She forbore at that time to tell Deborah her own trouble; and this trait indicates, I think, the depth of her character.

As for Deborah, she soon cried herself out, and one afternoon Sarah heard her laughing with the baker's man, laughing from the chest, as young ladies are ordered to sing (but forbidden by Sir Corset), and an octave lower than she had ever spoken up-stairs since she came.

Sarah was surprised, and almost shocked at first. But she said to herself, "Poor Deb, she is as light-hearted as ever; and why should she break her heart for him? *he* wouldn't for her."

By and by Deborah used to leave the house when her work was done, if Sarah stayed at home. She could not read, so she must walk and she must talk. She had not read a single book this five years; but her powers of conversation were developed. She had sold country produce in two markets weekly, and picked up plenty of country proverbs and market chaff.

She soon took to visiting all her old acquaintances in the place, and talked nineteen to the dozen; and here observe a phenomenon. Her whole vocabulary was about nine hundred words, whereas you and I know nine thousand and more, yet she would ring a triple bob-major on that small vocabulary, and talk learned us to a standstill. As her talk was all gossip, she soon knew more about the Mansells than they knew themselves, and heard that Mansell drank and lived upon his wife.

This gave her honest concern. Now she held the clew to Sarah's absences and frequent return with her husband in charge and inarticulate. She did not blurt it out to her sister, nor was she angry at her want of confidence. She knew Sarah's character, and rather admired her for not exposing her man to any human creature. Still, when she did know it, she threw out so many hints one after another that Sarah, who, poor soul, yearned for sympathy, made at last a partial disclosure, with many a sigh.

Deborah made light of it, and hoped it was only for a time, and after all Sarah was glad she knew, for Deborah's tongue was not in reality so loose as it was fluent. She could chatter without any appearance of reserve, and yet be as close as wax. She brought home to Sarah all she heard, but she never told anything out of the house.

One day she said to Sarah, "Do you know a man called Varney — Dick Varney?" Sarah said she had never heard his name.

"Then," said Deborah, "you ought to know him."

"Why?"

"Because when you know your enemy you can look out for him, and he is your enemy after a manner — for 'tis he that leads your husband astray, so that young man said."

"What young man?"

"I think his name is Spencer, and somebody called him Joe; he was a good-looking chap anyway. I suppose he was a friend of Jemmy Mansell's. Somebody did praise you for a good daughter and a good wife, but one that had made a bad bargain; then that was the signal for each to have a fling at Jemmy Mansell. Never you mind what *they* said. This handsome chap stood up for him, and said the man was a first-rate workman, and meant no harm, but he had got a tempter — this Dick Varney. So then I told the young chap who I was, and he seemed quite pleased like, and said he had heard of me. Of course what he said I stood by; I said there couldn't be a better husband or a better man — bar drink — than James Mansell."

Sarah thanked her, but said, "Oh! that we should come to be talked of!"

"Everybody *is*, within walls," said Deborah, "and them that listens learns. By the same token you keep your eye on that Varney."

"How can I? I don't know him."

"No more you do, and what a stupid I must be not to ask that good-looking chap more about him. I wonder who he is; I will ask James."

"No."

"Why not?"

"Describe him to me."

"Well, he is tall and broad-shouldered, and has light hair, and dark gray eyes like jewels, and teeth as white as milk, and a gentle, pleasant way; looks a bit sad, he does, as if he had been crossed in love, but that is not likely — no woman would be such a fool that had eyes in her head. Then he was very clean and neat, like a man that respected hisself; and lowered his voice a bit to speak to a woman. There! a duck!"

Sarah looked a little surprised at this ardent description. However, she reflected, and, I suppose, she thought there must be some truth in it, though it had not struck her. Then she said carelessly, "What was his business?"

"I think he was in the same way as James himself."

"Was his name Pinder — Joseph Pinder?"

"That, or something. The name was new to me, but Joseph for certain."

"Well, if it is Joseph Pinder, I will ask you not to make acquaintance with *him*. You seem to be making acquaintances very fast for a woman in your condition."

"My condition," said Deborah. "Why, that is where it is — I can't bear to think. I must work or talk. It is very unkind of you to cast my condition in my teeth."

"I didn't mean to, Deb. There, forgive me."

"With all my heart; you have got your own trouble. Only give me a reason, why am I not to speak to this Joseph — such an outlandish name — this handsome Joe?"

"Well, then, one reason is, he courted me after a fashion."

"Oh, la! Is that where the shoe pinches?"

"We used to walk together like two children till my man came; then they quarrelled, and that Pinder beat him, and I can't forgive it; and the first night James was quite overtaken with liquor, Pinder brought him home, and it was like a knife in my heart."

"Poor Sally! You saw you had chosen the wrong one."

"Chosen the wrong one!" cried Sarah, contemptuously. "I wouldn't give my James's little finger, drunk or sober, for a thousand Joseph Pinders. There, it is no use talking to you. You don't understand a word I say. Anyway, I do beg of you not to make acquaintance with the man, nor let him know what passes in this house."

"Why, of course not, Sally, if you say the word. What is the man to me? Your will is my pleasure, and your word my law."

This from an elder sister merited an embrace, and it received a very tender one.

At last it came to this, that nobody in the town who knew James Mansell would employ him.

Instead of contributing his share, he lived entirely on his wife, at home and abroad, and he lived ill. So the house was divided against itself. The husband, the bread-winner in theory, was doing all he could to ruin the family; two brave women were fighting tooth and nail to save it. They were losing ground a little, and that alarmed Sarah terribly; but then she had a reserve: sixty pounds hidden in an iron box, with a good key. She never told her husband of this. She hid it for his good. The box was a small one, but she had it fastened with strong iron clamps to the wall, and she kept salables before it to hide it.

Mansell's extravagance she fed from the till — not without comments, grave and sorrowful, not bitter; yet they embittered him. The man's vanity was prodigious; it equalled his demerit.

Whilst the brave wife and mother was thus battling with undeserved adversity, she received a new alarm.

Being single-handed in the shop, it was her way to prepare, with Deborah's assistance, weighed and marked packets of sugar, tea, soda, and other things; and one evening they had taken a lump of Irish butter out of the tub and weighed five pounds, and left it on a slab. Early in the morning a customer came for a pound. This was weighed off, and left so small a residue that Mrs. Mansell weighed it, and found there was only one pound and a half left.

She could hardly believe her senses at first, but the weight was clear. She asked Deborah, with assumed carelessness, how much butter they had weighed out last night. Deborah replied, without hesitation, "Five pounds."

After that day she looked more closely into the stock, and she detected losses and diminutions. One day a slice off a side of bacon; another, a tin of preserved meat; in short, a system of pilfering. She shrank from the idea of theft, if it could be accounted for in any other way. She thought it just possible, though not likely, that Deborah had made free with these things for the use of the house. She told her what she had discovered, and asked her as delicately as possible whether she ever came to the shop for anything that was wanted in her kitchen.

Deborah went off like a woman of gunpowder, cross-examined by a torch. "Me take anything out of your shop for my kitchen!"

"Well, 'tis my kitchen and all — 'twould only be from Peter to Paul."

The other was not to be pacified so. "Me take what does not belong to me! Oh! have I lived to be suspected by my own sister? I'd cut off this arm sooner than I would steal with this hand. I never wronged a creature of a farthing or a farthing's worth in all my life. Send me home. Send me to the workhouse. I am not fit to be trusted, and so many things about. Oh! oh! oh! oh!" and down she sat and rocked.

"There! there! there!" cried Sarah, coming swiftly and sitting beside her. "Now where would have been the harm if you had taken things for our own use? And oughtn't I to ask you before I suspected something worse? O Deborah, haven't I trouble enough, that you must cry and set me off too? Oh! oh! You might think a little of *me* as well as yourself. Is it nothing to you that I am robbed and all? Haven't I trouble enough without that? There, give over — that's a dear, and I'll give you a new print this very day."

Deborah dried up directly, and her sentiments shifted like the wind. "I wish I had them that rob you," said she, and she extended her great, long, powerful arm formidably.

"We must watch day and night, dear," said Mrs. Mansell, gloomily, and with a weary air, and she took it all to heart, even the pain she had given Deborah, whose mind was like running water, and retained no trace of the dialogue in ten minutes. Not so the deeper nature. Mrs. Mansell brooded over it all, and when the shop was shut, she sat in the parlor — sat and suffered. James Mansell was out as usual. She sat and looked at Lucy, and wondered what would be her own fate and her child's at the end of this desperate struggle. She became hysterical, a rare thing with her, and Deborah found her trembling all over where she sat, and quite shaken. She was despondent and exasperated by turns.

She had twitches all over her body, and hot tears ran out of her eyes.

It was a woman's break-down, and Deborah, who knew the female constitution, just sat beside her and held her hand. Sarah clung to this hand, and clutched it every now and then convulsively. She spoke in broken sentences. "Too many things against me: drunkenness here, theft there. It will end in the workhouse. How else can it end? I'm glad father's dead. Poor father! —have I lived to say that?" The talkative Deborah said never a word, so Sarah began to calm down by degrees with gentle sighs and tremors.

Unluckily, before she was quite calm, Mansell knocked at the door. Sarah could tell his knock, or his footstep, or any sound he made in a moment. Her face beamed. It was early for him. He was sober, and she could tell him of this new trouble.

Deborah ran to let him in. Sarah stood up smiling to welcome him.

He blundered into the room, beastly drunk, neckcloth loose, eyes bloodshot; he could just keep on his legs.

Sarah caught up her child with the strength of a lioness, flung one full and fiery look of horror and disgust right in her husband's face, then rushed majestically from the room, carrying her child across her arms.

Drunk as he was, the brute staggered under this tremendous glance and eloquent rush. He blundered against the mantelpiece, and hung his head.

Deborah set her arms akimbo. "You've done this once too often," she said, grimly, and her eyes glittered at him wickedly.

"Mind your own business," said he. "Why did she run away from me like that?"

"Because of the child, you may be sure. There, don't let us quarrel. Will you have your supper, now you are here?"

"I don't want my supper; I want my wife. You go and fetch her directly." He was excited, and Deborah, determined to keep the peace, took his message to Sarah in Lucy's bedroom.

Sarah was shaking all over, and refused to come. "I dare not," said she. "I am in such a state I feel I might say or do something I should rue afterward, for I love him. Would to God I had never seen him, but I love him. Go you and pacify him. I shall sleep here beside my child."

Deborah went down, and found Mansell in the arm-chair, looking spiteful. She told him Sarah was not well. She could not come down.

"Humbug!" roared James Mansell; "she is shamming. I'll go and fetch her down," and he bounced up. Deborah whipped before the door. "Stand out of my way," said he, loftily, and came blundering at her. She pinned him directly by the collar with both hands, shook him to and fro as a dog does a rat, then put both hands suddenly to his breast, made a grand rush forward with him, and with the double power of her loins and her great long arms, shot him all across the room into the arm-chair with such an impetus that the chair went crashing against the wall, and the man in it head down, feet up.

Mr. Mansell stared dumfounded at first. He thought some supernatural power had disposed of him. He did not allow for suddenness, and was not aware that pulling and pushing go by weight, and that strapping Deborah, without an ounce of fat, weighed two stone more than he did, owing to certain laws of construction not worth particularizing *à la française.*

"I never lay my hand on a woman," said he, moodily.

"I'm not so nice," replied Deborah, erect, with her fists upon her hips. "I can lay my hands on a man — for his good. I've had that much to do afore now, and

I never found one could master me, bar hitting, which I call that cowardly."

Then, as time was up for a change of sentiment — eighty whole seconds — she shifted to friendly advice.

"Jemmy, my man," said she, "women are curious creatures. They are not themselves at times. Our Sally has got the nerves. She might fling a knife at you if you tormented her just now, sobbing over her child. Take my advice, now, that is a friend to both of you. Let her a-be. If you don't upset her no more to-night, which I declare *you sha'n't*, she'll be as sweet as honey in the morning."

"She may," said Mansell, sullenly, "but I shall not. If she lies away from me to-night, I'll lie away from her a year or more, mind that."

"Where? In the union?"

"No. That is as much as to say she keeps me."

"And doesn't she? Where does the money come from you spend in drink?"

"I have got an offer of work."

"Work? It isn't under your skin."

"Not here, but this is in America. Such work as mine is paid out there, and I can make my fortune, and not have it flung in my face I'm living on a woman."

Deborah did not think this gasconade worth replying to. She suggested repose as the best thing for him after the hard work he had gone through, lifting mugs and quarterns all the way from the counter to his teeth. With much trouble she got him up the stairs, and took off his neckcloth and loosened his shirt-collar. Then she retired for a reasonable time, and when he was in bed came and took away the candle from him as she would from a child. He called to her, —

"Hear my last word."

"No such luck," said she, dryly.

"Hold your tongue."

"If I hold my tongue, I shall slobber my teeth."

"Can you listen a moment?"

"If I hold my breath."

"Then mind this. If she leaves me like this, I'll leave *her*. I won't be taken up and put down by any woman."

"I'll tell her, my man," said she, to quiet him; then took away his candle, and went down-stairs to her own room, for she slept on the kitchen floor. She seized a feather-bed, lugged it up the stairs, and made up a bed on the floor for Sarah. "He is all right," said she, and not a word more. Then she went down-stairs, and put her red hair in curl-papers — for she was flirting all round, No. 1 had been dead six months — and slept like a stone upon a hard mattress, not harder than her own healthy limbs.

CHAPTER III.

What wonderful restoratives are a good long sleep and the dawn of day! They co-operate so, invigorating the body and fortifying the mind. They clear away the pain and the forebodings night engenders, and brighten not only the face of nature, but our individual prospects. The glorious dawn falling upon our refreshed eyes and invigorated bodies is like a trumpet sounding "*Nil desperandum!*" Mrs. Mansell was one of the many whom sleep and dawn re-inspired and reconciled to her lot that morning. She had slept in a pure atmosphere — untarnished by a drunkard's breath. She awoke with her nerves composed and her heart strengthened.

Her life was to be a battle — that was plain. But she had forces and an ally. Her forces were rare health, strength, prudence, and sobriety. Her ally was Deborah. She began the battle this morning brightly and hopefully. She was the first up, and having dressed herself neatly, as she always did, she put on a large apron and bib, coarse but clean, and descended to the parlor. She called up the spiral staircase — "James!"

No answer.

She went into the shop, and called down the kitchen-stairs. No reply from her sister. "Lazy-bones," said she. She struck a light in the shop, and her eye fell upon a large hand-bell. She took it up and rang it down the kitchen stairs. Instantly there was a sort of yawn of distress. Then she bustled into the parlor, and rang it up the spiral staircase. Then she set it down, and took her candle into the shop and sorted and dusted and counted the goods, and cleaned the counter.

Presently in sauntered Deborah from the kitchen, with her hair in curl-papers, and a chasm in the upper part of her gown, so that she seemed half dislocated; and she adhered to the wall for support, and sprawled out one long arm and a hand, which she flattened against the wall, to hold on by suction sooner than not at all. "Here's a (yawn) to-do," said she. "Anybody's (yawn) cat dead?"

"No, but mine are catching no mice. Nobody to light the fire and give my man his breakfast while I open the shop. Aren't you ashamed of yourself?"

"Too sleepy (yawn) to be ashamed of anything."

"Then wake up and bustle."

Deborah gave herself a wriggle that set her long bare arms flying like windmills, and went to work. The pair soon brightened the parlor, and then Sarah came into the shop and opened the door; but the patent shutters outside were heavy and stiff, as she knew, so she called Deborah.

"You might pull down those heavy shutters outside for me. You are stronger than I am, for all you look like a jelly-bag."

Deborah drew back in dismay. "Me go into the street! I'm not half dressed."

"Fine shapes don't need fine clothes. You might catch another husband on the pavement."

"I'd rather catch him in church with my new bonnet." Then, to escape any more invitations to publish her curl-papers — for that was where the shoe really pinched — she ran maliciously into the parlor, screaming up the corkscrew stairs, "Here, master! James Mansell, you are wanted!"

"Be quiet," said Sarah, coloring; "he is not your servant. Them that do it for me will be round directly. It isn't the master's business to take down the wife's shutters."

"I think it is then, if he is a man, for it is a man's work."

Deborah spoke this at James Mansell, and at the top of her voice. The words were hardly out of her mouth when a man's hands were seen to pull down the heavy shutters and let in the light.

"Didn't I tell you?" said the ready Deborah. "And here is one dropped from the sky express."

"Why, it is Joseph Pinder," said Mrs. Mansell, drawing back.

"La! Your old sweetheart!"

"Never! For shame! Hold your tongue!"

Deborah grinned with delight, and whipped into the parlor to hide her curl-papers and listen. Sarah went behind the counter and minded her business. She made sure Pinder would proceed on his course, as soon as he had done that act of courtesy.

Instead of that he came slowly and a little sheepishly in at the door, and stood at the counter opposite her. He was in a complete suit of white cotton, all but his soft brown hat, and looked wonderfully neat and clean.

"Good-morning, Mrs. Mansell," said he, respectfully.

"Good-morning, Mr. Pinder," said Mrs. Mansell. Then, stiffly, "Sorry you should take so much trouble."

Pinder looked puzzled, so, woman-like, she answered his looks.

"I mean, to take down my shutters. I pay a person express."

"Oh, I heard somebody say it was a man's work."

Sarah explained hurriedly: "Oh, that was my sister."

"What, Deborah?"

"Deborah," said she, dryly, in a way calculated to close the dialogue. But Pinder did not move. He fumbled with his hat, and at last said he was not there by accident, but had come to see her.

"What for?" and she opened her eyes rather wide.

"A little bit of business."

Sarah colored, but she said dryly, "What can I serve you?"

"Oh, it is not with *you;* it is with your husband."

"Indeed," said she, rather incredulously, almost suspiciously.

"Got him a job."

"That is very good of you, I'm sure," was the reply, and now the tone was satirical. "My husband has plenty of jobs."

"Well, he used to have; but the shopkeepers here are against him now; they say he leaves his work."

Sarah seized this opportunity to get rid of Mr. Pinder altogether. "Did you come here to run my husband down to me?" she inquired haughtily.

"Am I one of that sort?" said Pinder defiantly. He was beginning to take offence, as well he might. "I came to do the man a good turn, whether I get any thanks for it or not."

Sarah colored and held her peace. He had taken the right way with her now. But it was hard for the good-natured fellow to hold spite, especially against her; he went naturally back to his friendly manner, and told her that the new Rectory was being decorated by a London firm, and their grainer had been taken ill, and he (Pinder) had told the foreman he knew a tiptop grainer, James Mansell, and the foreman had jumped at him.

"I've made the bargain, Sarah. London price. It's a thirty-pound job." And he looked proud.

"Thirty pounds?" exclaimed Sarah.

"Yes; it's a large house, panelled rooms, and hall and staircase, all to be grained, besides the doors and shutters, and skirtings. Only mind, these swell London tradesmen won't stand — unpunctuality. Where is he, if you please?"

"Oh, he is at home."

"Then let me see him directly."

"You can't just now."

Deborah, who had listened to every word, chose this moment to emerge from the parlor. She had utilized her curl-papers by lighting the fire with them, and came out very neat in a charming cap, and courtesied. "Give him half an hour, Mr. Pinder," said she sweetly; "he is in bed."

Pinder looked at his watch, and said he could not wait half an hour—he was due; but he wrote a line with his pencil for Mansell to give to the foreman; then he put on his cap and said, jauntily, "Good-morning, ladies."

"Good-morning, sir," said Deborah, graciously.

"And thank you, Joseph," said Sarah, gently.

"You are very welcome; I suppose you know that," said he, as bluntly as he could.

When he was gone, Sarah's artificial indifference disappeared with a vengeance. She ran into the parlor, and screamed up the spiral staircase, "James! James! Such good news! Get up and come down directly!"

"All right," said a sleepy voice.

Then she turned on Deborah. "And what call had you to say he was in bed?"

"Oh, the truth may be blamed, but it can't be shamed," was Deborah's steady reply.

Proverbs being unanswerable, Sarah changed the subject. "And if you haven't got on my new cap!"

Deborah had no by-word ready to justify misappropriation of another lady's cap; so she took a humble tone. "La, Sally! I couldn't help it, he was such a nice young man. You can't abide him, but tastes they differ. Do you think he will come again? If he does, I really must set my cap at him."

"But not *mine;*" and Sarah, who was in rare spirits, whipped her cap in a moment off her sister's head.

"La! you needn't to take my hair and all," whined Deborah. "That's my own, anyway."

"Then you are not in the fashion," was the ready reply. "Come, Deb, enough chat; this is a busy morning, and a happy morning to make us forget last night forever. Now, dear, run and make my man his coffee — nice and strong."

"I will."

"And clean his boots for going out."

"If I must, I must," said Deborah, with sudden languor. She never could see why women should clean men's boots.

"And air him a shirt."

"Is that all?" inquired Deborah, affecting surprise.

"All at present," said the mistress, dryly.

"What, hasn't he any hose to darn, nor hair to be cut, nor teeth to be cleaned for him?"

"You go on, with your cheek," and she threatened Deborah merrily with a duster. Her heart was light. And now a customer or two trickled in at intervals. She served them promptly and civilly.

Presently she saw her husband coming slowly down the spiral staircase. She ran into the parlor to meet him. Not a word about last night, but welcomed him with smiles and a long kiss. "Good news, dear," said she, jubilant.

He received her with discouraging languor: "Well, what is up?"

But she was not to be disheartened so easily. "Why, Jemmy dear! there's a job waiting for you at the Rectory, and you are to have thirty pounds for it."

"Thirty pounds! That will be a long job."

She tossed her head a little at that. "Why a long

job? It is not day work. It shouldn't be a long job if I had it to do, and was as clever as you are. Come, here's Deborah with your coffee and nice hot toast. Eat your breakfast and start. No, don't take it into the parlor, Deb, to waste more time; set it down here on the flap. I do love to see him eat."

Mr. Mansell, thus stimulated, put the coffee to his lips. But he set it down untasted, and said he couldn't.

"Try, dear; 'twill do you good."

"I can't, Sally; I am very ill; my head swims so, and my chest is on fire. Oh!" and Mr. Mansell leaned on the end of the counter and groaned aloud. He made so much of his disease that Sarah was alarmed, and told Deborah to run for the doctor.

That personage stood stock-still, and as ostentatiously calm as the invalid was demonstrative in his sufferings. "A doctor! Why, he'd make the man ill." She folded her arms and contemplated the victim. "Hot coppers," said she. "He only wants a hair of the dog that bit him." This with a composure that befitted the occasion; but it was not so received. "How dare you!" cried Sarah.

"Yes, Deb, for mercy's sake," moaned the sufferer — "for mercy's sake, a drop of brandy!"

Deborah would have gone for it directly if she had been mistress, but, as it was, she consulted her sister by the eye.

Sarah replied to that look with great decision. "Not if you are any sister of mine. Ay, that is the way of it — drink to be ill, and then drink to be well; and once you have begun, go on till you are ill again, and want a drop to start you again on the road to beggary and shame. Drink, drink, drink! in a merry-go-round that never halts." Then, firmly: "*You* drink *your* coffee without more words, and then go and work for your daughter like a man. Come!"

She held the cup out to him with a fine air of authority, though her heart was quaking all the time, and he, being just then in a subdued condition, took it resignedly, and sipped a little. Then a customer came in, but Sarah was not to be diverted from her purpose. She ordered Deborah to stand there and see him drain every drop. Deborah folded her bare arms and inspected the process loftily but keenly. He got through two-thirds of the contents, then showed her the balance with such a piteous look that she had compassion, stretched out her long arm for the cup, sent the contents down her throat with one gesture, and returned the cup with another gesture, half regal, half vulgar, all in two seconds, and James with admirable rapidity set the cup down empty under Sarah's eye, and so they abused her confidence.

"Well done," said she; "strong coffee is an antidote, they say, and work is another. Off you go to the Rectory, and work till one. Deborah will have a nice hot dinner ready for you by then." She found him his basket and his brushes, all cleaned by herself, though he had left them foul.

At this last trait a gleam of gratitude shot into his skull. He said, "Well, you are the right sort. It is some pleasure to work for you."

"And our child," said she. "Think of us both when you think of one. O Jemmy dear! if you should ever be tempted again, do but ask yourself whether them that tempt you to your ruin love you as well as we do."

"Say no more, Sally; I'll turn a new leaf. Here, give me a kiss over the counter." So they had a long conjugal embrace over the counter.

Deborah looked on, and said, in her way, "Makes my mouth water, being a widder."

"There," said James Mansell, turning to go. "I'll never touch a drop again until I have chucked that

thirty pounds into your lap, my girl." With this resolve, he left the shop.

Sarah must come round the corner, and watch him down the street: then she turned at the door, and beamed all over, and her eyes sparkled. "God bless him!" she cried. "There isn't a better workman, nor a better husband, nor a better man in Britain, only keep him from drink. Now is there?"

"La! Sarah, how can I tell? I never saw him sober six days running; but I have heard you say he used to be a good husband. And why not again, if he do but keep his word?"

"And he will; he is not the man to break his word, far less his oath. He turns over a new leaf to-day, and I'm a happy woman once more."

"And I'll have his dinner ready to the moment."

Deborah dived into the kitchen, and was heard the next moment working and whistling tunes of a cheerful character. No blacksmith or ploughboy could beat this rustic dame at that.

Mrs. Mansell was soon occupied at the counter. A cook came in, and bought three pounds of bacon at eightpence the pound for her mistress, and ditto of best Limerick at eleven-pence for the kitchen — these prices to be reversed in her housekeeping book. She also paid the week's bill, and demanded her perquisite. Sarah submitted, and gave her half a crown, or her mistress would have shopped elsewhere under her influence. Then came a maid-of-all-work for a packet of black lead, seven pounds of soda, two of sugar, a bar of soap, and some "connubial" blacking. Sarah said she was out of that. The slavey replied, with the usual attention to grammar, "Oh, yes, you do! Mrs. White's servant buys it here."

"Oh, that's Nubian blacking."

"Well, and that's what I want; saves a vast o' trouble."

Others came, child customers, some only just up to the counter, and many of them mute. These showed their coppers, and Sarah had to divine the rest. But she had a rare eye for them; she looked keenly at each mite, and knew what they wanted by their faces and their coin. She gave one a screw of tobacco for father, another a candle with paper wrapped round the middle, another an ounce of candy. But as it drew near one there was a lull in trade, and savory smells came up from the kitchen. The good wife must have a finger in her husband's dinner. She locked the shop-door and ran down to the kitchen fire, and when it had struck one, and everything was done to a turn, she ran up again and unlocked the door and laid a clean cloth in the little parlor, and had Lucy there very neat, that no attraction might be wanting to her converted husband and workman on his return to his well-earned meal.

By and by Deborah looked in with cheeks as red as her hair to say the steak would spoil if not eaten.

"But you mustn't *let* it spoil," objected Sarah, loftily. "He won't be long now" — then, with delight — "here he is," for a man's figure darkened the door. "No; it's only Joseph Pinder."

Joseph Pinder it was, and for once looking morose. He had a tin can with a narrowish neck in his hand, and put it down on the counter with some noise, as much as to say, "This time I am a customer and nothing more." Mrs. Mansell received him as such, went behind the counter directly, and leaned a little over, awaiting his orders.

"Half a gallon of turps," said he, almost rudely. Mrs. Mansell went meekly and filled his can from a little tank with a tap.

But Deborah, who never read books, always read faces. She scanned Pinder, and said, "You seem put out. Is there anything the matter?"

"Plenty," said he; "more than I like to tell. But she must know it sooner or later. Serves me right, any way, for recommending a"—

He stopped in time, and turned away from Sarah to Deborah, and said bitterly, "He never came to work at all. He fell in with a tempter in this very street, and got enticed away directly."

Sarah raised her hands in dismay, and uttered not a word, but an inarticulate cry of distress, so eloquent of amazement and dismay that Pinder's anger gave way to pity, and he began all of a sudden to make excuses for the offender, and lay the blame on Dick Varney, a dangerous villain with a cajoling tongue, a pickpocket's fingers, and a heart of stone. He turned to Sarah now, and enlarged on this villain's vices — said he had been in prison twice, and it was he who was ruining James Mansell.

But Sarah interrupted all this: "Never mind him. Where is my poor husband?"

"At 'The Chequers,' my mate says."

"Give me my shawl and bonnet, Deborah."

"What to do?" inquired Pinder, uneasily.

"To fetch him away," was the dogged reply.

Then at last the long-hidden truth came out. "Oh, it will not be the first time I have gone to a public-house and stood their jeers and his drunken anger for an hour or two, and brought him home at last. He has sworn at me before them all, but he never struck me. Perhaps that is to come. I think it will come to-day, for he was more violent last night than ever I knew him to be. I don't care, I'll have him home if I die for it."

"Not from 'The Chequers,' you won't. You don't know the place; there are bad women there as well as bad men. Why, it's a boozing-ken for thieves and their jades. Take a man away from them! they would soil

your ears and make your flesh creep, and perhaps mark your face forever. You stay beside your sister. I must go on with it now. I'll strike work at dinner-time for once in my life, and I'll bring your man home."

This melted both the sisters, Sarah most, who had been so cold to her old lover. "Oh, thank you, bless you, Joseph!" she sobbed.

"Don't cry, Sally," said the honest fellow, in a broken voice; "pray don't cry! I can't bear to see you cry," and he almost burst out of the place for fear he should break down himself, or say something kinder than he ought. His boy was waiting outside; he sent him in for the turps, and ordered him to tell the foreman to dock his afternoon time, he was gone to look after the grainer.

He went down to "The Chequers," and got there just in time to find Mansell quarrelling with three blackguards in the skittle-ground. Indeed, before he could interfere, one of them gave the drunken man a severe blow on the nose that made him bleed like a pig. The next moment the aggressor lay flat on his back, felled by Joe Pinder. The other two sparred up, but went down like nine-pins before that long, muscular arm, shot out straight from the shoulder. Then he seized Mansell, and said, "The villains have hurt you; come and be cured." And so, not giving him time to think, he half coaxed, half pushed him out of the place, and got him on the road home.

Meantime Sarah sat sorrowful, and said her happy day was soon ended, and she wished her life was ended too. Deborah sat beside her, and tried to comfort her.

"One good thing," said she, "you have got a friend now, when most wanted, and 'a friend in need is a friend indeed.' And to think you had the offer of Joseph Pinder, and could go and take James Mansell!"

Sarah drew up: "And would again," said she, "with all his faults. I would not give him for Joe Pinder, nor any other man."

"Well, that's a good job, as you are tied to him," remarked Deborah.

"Do you think Joseph will bring him home?"

"If any man can. I think ever so much of that chap."

"Then don't let the dinner spoil, at all events."

Deborah didn't trust herself to speak. She got up resignedly to attend to the possible wants of this deserving husband. Sarah divined that it cost her a struggle, and tried to gild the pill.

"You are a good sister to me," said she.

"That I am," said Deborah, frankly. "But so are you to me; and I was always as fond of you as a cow is of her calf."

"And I haven't forgot the print," said Mrs. Mansell; "but you see how I have been put about. I mustn't go to my safe even for you, but there's half a sovereign in the till, and you shall have it before some fresh trouble comes to make me forget."

Deborah's eyes sparkled, but she said it wasn't a fit time, there were too many sucking at her.

"And that is true; but they can't drain me. Don't tell a soul; I make a deal of money in this little shop. I wouldn't give my Saturdays for five pounds apiece." Then almost in a whisper: "I've got sixty pounds put by in that safe there, and the safe fastened to the wall. I mustn't touch that money, 'tis for my darling Lucy. But there's an odd half-sovereign in the till, and it is for you. There are some beauties at Coverley's over the way." Dress, having once been mentioned, was, of course, the dominant substantive. Whilst she was speaking, she took out her keys and opened the till. There was much less silver in it than she expected to

find. She put both hands in, and turned it all over in a moment. There was no half-sovereign. "Come here! come here!" she screamed; "the till has been robbed."

"La, Sarah," cried Deborah, "never!"

"But I say it has; there's not a shilling here but what I have taken to-day."

"When did you look last?"

"Yestereen at six, and counted half a sovereign and eighteen shillings in silver. What will become of me now? — there are thieves about. Heaven knows how the goods go, but this is some man's work."

"Then I wish I had him," said Deborah, and she thrust out her great arms and long, sinewy fingers. The words were scarcely out of her lips, and the formidable fingers still extended, knuckles downward, when James Mansell, his shirt and trousers covered with blood, was thrust in at the door by Joseph Pinder; his own white dress had suffered by the contact.

Both women screamed at sight of him, and Sarah cried, "Oh! they have murdered him."

Pinder said hastily, "No, no, he's none the worse — only a bloody nose."

"Then he is cheap served," said Deborah.

"Ay, but let me tell you I came just in time; there were three of them on to him."

"Oh," cried Sarah, "the cowards!"

Mr. Mansell caught at the word "cowards." Cried he, "Let's go and fight 'em."

"Not if I know it," said Pinder, stopping his rush, and holding him like a vise.

"What, are you turned coward and all? Look here, he knocked 'em all three down like nine-pins."

"Then there let 'em lie," said this rational hero.

"I sha'n't," said the irrational one. "I'll go and just kick 'em up again, and then" —

But the next process was not revealed, because in illustrating the first Mr. Mansell sat down on the floor with a heavy bump, and had to be picked up by Pinder and lectured. "What you want just now is not more fighting, but a wash, and then a sleep."

Sarah proposed an amendment: "What he wants most, Mr. Pinder, is a heart and a conscience."

"Is that all?" said the impenitent.

Deborah giggled. But Mr. Mansell had better have kept his humor for a less serious situation. The much-enduring wife turned upon him the moment he spoke:

"After all you promised and swore to me this day. Good work and good money brought to your hand by one we had no claim on, either you or I, a good home to come to, a good dinner cooked with loving hands, and a good wife and daughter that counted the minutes till they could see you eating it. What are you made of? You are neither a husband, nor a father, nor a man."

CHAPTER IV.

"Hold your tongue!" roared the culprit.

But her blood was fairly up, and instead of flinching from him, she came at him like a lioness.

"No: I have held my tongue long enough and screened your faults, and hid my trouble from the world. What right have such men as you to marry and get children that they hate and would beggar if they could, as well as their miserable wives?" She put her hand suddenly to her forehead as a keen pain shot through it. "He will drive me wild. If you are a sister of mine, take him out of my sight." She stamped her foot on the ground, and her eyes flashed. "D'ye hear? Take him out of my sight before my heart bursts my bosom, and I curse the hour I ever saw him."

Deborah had bundled him into the parlor before this climax came, and she now got him out of sight altogether, saying, "Come, Jemmy! 'A wise man never faces an angry woman.'"

As for Sarah, she sank down upon a seat, languid and limp; and after the thunder the rain.

Pinder, with instinctive good-breeding, had turned to go. But now he couldn't. The woman he had always loved, and who had given him so much pain, sat quietly weeping, as one who could no longer struggle. He looked at her, and, to use the expressive words of Scripture, his bowels yearned over her. He did not know what he could say to do her any good, yet he couldn't go without trying. He said gently, "Don't despair; while there's life there's hope."

She shook her head sadly, and said gently, "There's none for me now."

"Oh, yes; if that Varney could be got out of the way, *he* would listen to reason. He is the wicked one; your man is only weak."

"Where's the odds if they do the same thing? But it is very good of you to make excuses for him."

She then took out a white pocket-handkerchief and meekly dried her eyes; then she stood up and said, in a grave, thoughtful way, — which he recognized as her old manner, — "Let me look at you."

She took a step toward him, but he did not move toward her. On the contrary, he stood there and fidgeted, and when she looked full at him he hung down his head a little.

"Nay, look at me," said she; "you have done nought to be ashamed of."

Being so challenged, he did look at her, but not so full as she did at him. It was a peculiarity of this woman that she could gaze into a man's face without either seeming bold or feeling ashamed. She never took her eye off Pinder's face during the whole dialogue which follows. Said she, slowly and thoughtfully, and her eye perusing him all the time, "You must be a very good young man. Years ago you courted me honorably, and I was barely civil to you."

Pinder said gently, "You never deceived me."

"No, but I never valued you. Now that I am older, I have noticed that for a woman to refuse a man makes him as bitter as gall. Dear heart! do but wound his vanity, and his love, such as 'tis, turns to spite directly; but instead of that you have always spoken respectful of me, for it has come round to my ears; and you have held aloof from me, and that was wise and proper, till you saw I was in trouble, and then you came to me to do

me a good turn in the right way through my unfortunate husband. You are one of a thousand, and may God reward you!"

By this time Pinder's eyes had gradually sunk to the ground before the calm gaze and the intelligent praise of one who was still very dear to him.

"Have you done?" said he dryly, inspecting the floor.

"Yes," said she; "I have thought my thought and said my say."

"Well, then, I should like to tell you something. It makes a man better to love a good woman, even if he can't win her and wear her. I studied you when you were a maid, and it set me against a many vulgar vices. I have had my eye on you since you were a wife, and that has made me respect you still more, and respect virtue. You have a dangerous enemy in that Dick Varney. Against him you want a friend. I seem to feel somehow as if I was called upon to be that friend, and I do assure you, Sarah, that I am not so unreasonable as I was when the disappointment was fresh. I should have been downright happy to-day if things had gone to your mind. After all, the day isn't over yet, and I've struck work. Is there nothing I can do drink and Dick Varney can't spoil, confound them?"

Thus urged, and being beset with troubles, and feeling already the rare comfort and support of a male friend, she confessed she had another trouble — a small one comparatively, but not a small one on the top of the others. She was being robbed. She told him all about it, and with a workman's quickness he asked to see the lock of the till.

He examined this closely, and detected at once, by abrasions in the metal, that it had been opened with a picklock, not a key. He told her so, and she said she was none the wiser.

"I am, though," said he. "It shows that nobody in the house has done it. It's professional. I should not wonder if this was Varney and all. Why, he's an old hand at this game, and has been in trouble for no other thing. Does he ever come into your shop?"

"He may. I don't know him by sight."

Pinder reflected. "James Mansell tells him everything, you may be sure, and it's just like the scoundrel to steal in here and rob the wife at home, and ruin the husband abroad."

Then he thought again, and presently slapped his thigh with satisfaction, for he thought he saw a way to turn all this to profit.

"If we can only catch that Varney, and give him five years' penal, — it won't be less, being an old offender, — Mansell will lose his tempter, and then he'll listen to you and me, strike drink, go in for work, and be a much happier man, and you a happy woman."

"Oh, these are comforting words!" said poor Sarah. "But how am I to catch the villain?"

"Others must do that. You go to the police station, see the superintendent, and make your complaint. I'll come after you, and talk to Mr. Steele, the detective; he is a friend of mine, and will soon know all about it. A drunken thief is as leaky as the rest. But you must keep your own counsel; your sister has a good heart, but she is a chatterbox, and out every evening in half a dozen houses. I don't like to go with you because of the blood on my clothes; but if you will start at once, I will change my coat and join you at the station, and bring you back."

Sarah carried out these instructions with her usual fidelity. She ascertained that her husband was lying fast asleep upon the bed; she put on her shawl and bonnet, confided Lucy and the shop to Deborah, and

when the latter asked where she was going, said dryly, "There and back." With that she vanished.

"There, now," said Deborah, "I owe that to you, Mr. Pinder."

"How so?"

"When they have got a nice young man to tell their minds to, they don't waste words on a sister."

"Well, you needn't grudge me," said he. "It's five years since she spoke a word to me." So then he retired in his turn, and Deborah had only the customers and little Lucy to talk to.

The customers of this little shop, accustomed to the grave, modest Sarah, must have been a little surprised at the humors of her substitute.

The first to be astonished was a gamekeeper. He came in, spruce in velveteen jacket and leathern gaiters, from the country. He stared at Deborah, none the less that she happened just then to be whistling a poacher's song.

"Why, where's the mistress?" said he.

"Gone after the master."

"And where's the master?"

"Gone before the mistress."

"I want a pound o' powder."

"Well, money will buy it. What powder? Emery-powder, putty-powder, violet-powder?"

"No, gunpowder, to be sure."

Deborah recoiled: "I wouldn't touch it for a pension."

The gamekeeper laughed. "Well," said he, "you are a pretty shopwoman."

"Oh, sir," said Deborah, coquettishly, "and I'm sure you are a beautiful gamekeeper."

He took a considerable time to comprehend this retort; when he had mastered the difficulty, he said, "Well, let us trade. You'll beat me at talk. Powder isn't loose; it's in a canister."

"Oh," said Deborah, "you seem to know all about it. Where does she keep it?"

"Why, there 'tis, right under your nose."

"Well, I can't see with my nose, can I?"

She took it and put it rather gingerly on the counter. "Now before it goes off and sends us all to heaven, or somewhere, what is the price of it, if you please?"

"Oh, the seller sets the price," said he.

"All right," said she. "Ten shillings! See what a lot you can kill with it."

"The mistress always makes it half a crown."

"Ay," said Deborah, "she is a hard woman. You give me a shilling, and I'll only charge you eighteenpence."

While he was counting out the money, a keen whistle was heard. Deborah's quick ears caught it directly: "Is that for you?" said she.

"No; more likely for you."

"All the better. 'Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad,'" said she, directing the invitation out into the street.

"I'd step out and whistle if I thought that," said the gamekeeper, showing his whistle. "Shall I try?"

"Why not?"

> It's a man's part to try,
> And a woman's to deny,
> And now you'd better fly,

for here comes our family sponge. Well, he does shake off liquor quick, I must say that for him."

James Mansell came through the parlor, clean washed and very neatly dressed.

"Mrs. Smart," said he, civilly.

"Mr. Mansell, I hope I see you well, sir. It's you for quick recoveries. Bloody noses is good for the brain,

apparently," suggested Deborah, "likewise a little repose after the fatigue of drinking and fighting."

"I did take forty winks."

"Well, sir, and now you are fortified, what's the next order? Another cup of coffee, warranted to contain a little chiccory, and a deal of bullock's liver, acorns, burned rags, and muck?"

"No; after this last experience I've forsworn all liquids except juicy meat and rotten potatoes. And I should feel greatly obliged if you would prepare me a nice hot steak, and fry me some onions nice and brown, as you alone can fry them."

"It is the least any woman can do for such a civil-spoken gentleman," said Deborah, and she dived at once into her kitchen, telling him to mind the shop. She little thought that his great object was to get rid of her.

He watched her out, and then went to the shop-door and looked out. It was Varney's whistle that had drawn him, and that worthy was waiting, and upon Mansell's invitation came cautiously in. Never was thief more plainly marked on a human being. His little, lank, wriggling body reminded one of a weasel, and his eyebrows seemed to spring from his temples and meet on the bridge of his nose. The eyes thus framed could not keep still a moment. They were like a hare's ears, in constant alarm. Between this man and Mansell an eager dialogue took place, rapid and low, which nobody heard but themselves. But any one who saw the speakers would feel sure those two were plotting some vile thing.

Something or other was definitely settled, even in that short time, and then Varney, who was ill at ease in that place, invited Mansell to turn out at once.

Mansell objected that he was famished, and dinner was being prepared.

"No, no," said the other; "I won't stay here. You follow me to Buck's dining-room; and mind, no more liquor for me to-day. It will be a ticklish job."

He wriggled away, and Mansell took his hat and called down the kitchen-stairs: "Mrs. Smart — Deborah — please come up here, and attend to the shop. I'm wanted for a job."

Deborah raised no objection, but she resolved on the spot that the steak she had twice prepared for a fool should now be eaten by a rational being, and to make quite sure of this she would eat it herself. So she put a little cloth on a tray, with the steak and two potatoes, and ran up with it all, and put this savory supper on the flap, and had just made her first incision, when in came one of the little mites I have referred to, intelligible to Sarah alone. The mite rapped the counter with a penny. Deborah left her steak and faced him.

"What can I serve you, sir?"

The mite hammered the counter with his copper.

"Oh, yes," said Deborah, "I see what I am to have out of you; but what are you to have for all that money?" Then she leaned over the child: "Is it baccy? Is it soap? It should be soap if I was your mother, you little pig. You won't tell me, eh? It's a dead secret. Let's try another way!" And she put down the likeliest articles one after another. "There, a penn'orth o' baccy for father; a penn'orth o' soap; a penn'orth o' lollipops." The child grabbed the lollipops in a moment and left the copper, and Deborah dashed back to her steak, muttering, "Sally would have known what he wanted by the color of his hair."

There was a run on the shop. For every three mouthfuls of steak, a penny customer. Deborah despatched them how she could, then dashed back to her steak — in vain: it was an endless *va et vient*. The last was a

sturdy little boy who came and banged down a penny, and in a wonderful bass voice for his size cried, "Bull's-eyes." Deborah, in imitation of his style, banged down a ready pennyworth of bull's-eyes, then banged the penny into an iron basin, then dashed back and hacked away at her steak. "Oh, dear!" said she, "I wish a shilling would come in and then a lull instead of this continual torrent of fiery, untamed farthing pieces." She hadn't half finished her steak when Mrs. Mansell and Pinder came home.

"How is he now?" was Sarah's first word.

"Sober as a judge, and gone out for a job; and if it is all the same to everybody, I ask just ten minutes' peace to eat my supper." Then Deborah caught up the tray and fled into the kitchen.

She had not gone long when a detective in plain clothes looked in, and said in a low voice there was news. A female detective had been put on to Varney with rare success: she had listened in the bar of an eating-house, and had picked up the whole story — the kitchen was deserted every night; the servant was out gallivanting; Varney had come in through the kitchen and robbed the till, and to-night he was going to rob the safe or something.

"Now," said Steele, "get my men in without the servant knowing, and then send her out, and we shall nab the bloke to a certainty."

Pinder acquiesced, but Sarah began to exhibit weakness. "Oh, dear!" said she, "thieves and police, and perhaps pistols!"

Steele whispered to Pinder, "Get her out of the way, or she'll spill the treacle." Pinder persuaded her to go into James's room with the child until they should send for her. She consented very readily. Then Steele let in a policeman, and hid him behind a screen in the

parlor. Two more were hidden in an empty house opposite, watching every move. Then Pinder put up the shutters and darkened the shop. Now the question was how to get Deborah out of the house. Pinder had to go and ask Sarah if she could manage that. "In a minute," said she. She came down, and went into the kitchen with ten shillings, and told Deborah she should have her print gown in spite of them all. Then Deborah was keen to get out before the shops closed, and in due course the confederates heard her go out and bang the kitchen-door.

Now there was no saying positively whether Varney was on the watch or not; and if he was, he might make his attempt in a few minutes, or wait an hour or two. And as he was an old hand, he would probably look all round the house to see if there was danger. Every light had to be put out and the shutters drawn, and the screen carefully placed.

They closed the parlor-door, and hid in the parlor.

"But how is my man to get in?" Sarah whispered.

One of the black, undistinguishable figures replied to her, "Easy enough, only I hope he won't come this two hours: he would spoil all."

"Not come to his supper! Then that will be a sign he is not sober. I'm all of a tremble."

"Hush!"

"What? thieves?"

"No; but pray don't talk. He'll come in like a cat, you may be sure. Hark!"

"What is it?"

"The kitchen-window," whispered Steele.

Now Sarah was silent, but panted audibly in the darkness.

By and by a step was heard on the stairs. Then silence — another creaking step. The watchers huddled behind the screen.

What now took place they could only divine in part.

But I will describe it from the other side of the parlor-door.

A man opened the kitchen-door softly, and stepped in lightly and noiselessly as a cat.

He had a dark lantern, and flashed it one half-moment to show him the place. In that moment was revealed a face with a very small black mask. Small as it was, it effectually disguised the man, and made his eyes look terrible with the excitement of crime. He opened the parlor-door, flashed his light in for a moment, then closed the door. That was a trying moment to the watchers. They feared he would examine the room.

Then the man stepped softly to the kitchen-door, opened it, and whispered, "Coast clear: come on!" Another man came in on tiptoe. The first-comer handed him the light.

"No," whispered the other, "you hold the light. Give me the key."

Then the first-comer opened the bull's-eye direct on the safe, and gave the second man a bright new key, evidently forged for this job. The safe was opened by the second man. He looked, and uttered an ejaculation of surprise. Then he plunged his hands in, and there was a musical clatter that was heard and understood in the next room, and the watchers stole out softly.

"Here's a haul!" cried the man. "Come and reckon 'em on the counter. Why, there's more than fifty, I know." He put them down in a heap on the counter, and instantly the parlor-door opened, and a powerful bull's-eye shot its light upon the glittering coin. The man stood dumfounded. The other, with a yell, dashed at the kitchen-door, tore it open, and received the fire of another bull's-eye from the foot of the stairs. He staggered back, and in a moment was at the shop-door, and

opened it: the key was in it that James might be admitted if he came. Another bull's-eye met him there, held by a policeman, who stepped in, and bade his mate remain outside.

The shop was now well lighted with all these vivid gleams concentrated on the stolen gold, and every now and then playing upon the masked faces and ghastly cheeks and glittering eyes of the burglars.

Steele surveyed his trapped vermin grimly for a moment or two. He felt escape was impossible.

"Now, Dick Varney," said he, "you are wanted. Handcuff him." The smaller figure made no resistance. "Now who's your pal? Don't know him by his cut. Come, my man, off with that mask, and show us your ugly mug." He was going to help him off with it; but the man caught up a knife that Deborah had left on the counter.

"Touch me if you dare!"

"Oh, that's the game, is it?" said Steele sternly. "Draw staves, men. Now don't you try that game with me, my bloke. Fling down that knife, and respect the law, or you'll lie on that floor with your skull split open." The man flung the knife down savagely. "And now who are you?"

The man tore his mask off with a snarl of rage.

"I'M THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE!"

He rang these words out like a trumpet. A faint moan was heard in the parlor.

"Gammon!" said Steele contemptuously.

"Ask Dick Varney, ask Joe Pinder there," said the man. "Ask anybody."

"Ask nobody but me," said the miserable wife, coming suddenly forward. "He is my husband, sir, and God help me!"

"D'ye hear?" cried the raging villain, mortified to

the core, yet exultant in his revenge: "This house is *mine*, this shop is *mine*, that woman is *mine*, and this money is *mine*." He clutched the gold, and put it insolently into his breeches pockets. "Take your hand off that man, Bobby."

"Not likely," said Steele. "A thief caught in the act."

"A thief! Why, he is my servant doing my business, under my orders: *one* of my servants. My wife there, she's my servant in law: collared my money and hid it away; I ordered another of my servants to open the safe and get me back my own. He's here by my authority."

"Why were you in masks, my bold blackguard?" asked Steele.

"Oh, pray don't anger him, sir," said poor Sarah. "Yes, James, you are the master. It was all a mistake: we had no idea — Oh!" She tottered, and put her hand to her brow.

Steele helped her to a chair. So small an incident did not interrupt her master's eloquence. "Respect the law, says you? Pretty limbs of the law you are, that don't know the law of husband and wife."

Long before this Steele had seen plainly enough that he was in the wrong box. "We know the law well enough," said he dejectedly. "It's a little one-sided, but it's the law. Come, men, loose that vagabond."

"He shall bring an action for false imprisonment."

"No, he won't."

"Why not? He has got the law on his side."

"And we have got his little mask, and his little antecedents on ours."

Varney whipped out of the place, and at the same time Deborah opened the kitchen-door and stood aghast.

"Come, men," said Steele, "clear out: we are only

making mischief between man and wife, and she'll be the sufferer, poor thing!"

"No," said James Mansell authoritatively. "I'm the master, and since you have heard one story, I'll trouble you to stay and hear the other. I'm the one that is being robbed — of my money, and my wife's affections, and my good name."

"O James!" gasped Sarah, "pray don't say so. Don't think so for a moment."

He ignored her entirely: never looked at her, but went on to the detective, "My wife here hid my money away from me."

"To pay my master's rent, and make his child a lady," put in Sarah.

"And now she and her old sweetheart there" —

"Sweetheart! I never had but thee."

"They have put the mark of a thief on me in this town. So be it. I leave it forever. I'm off to America."

He marched to the street door, then turned to shoot his last dart: "*With my money*" — and he slapped his pockets — "and *my* liberty" — and he waved his hat.

"But I'll have your life," hissed Pinder, and strode at him, with murder in his eyes.

But Sarah Mansell, who sat there crushed, and seemed scarcely sensible, bounded to her feet in a moment, and seized Pinder with incredible vigor.

"Touch him if you dare!" cried she.

And would you believe it, mates, she had no sooner stopped him effectually than she turned weaker than ever, and sank all limp against the man she had seized with a clutch of steel? Then he had nothing to do but support her faint head against his manly breast, and so, arrested by woman's vigor, which is strong for a moment, and conquered by woman's weakness, which is invincible, he half led, half lifted her tenderly back to her seat.

This defence of her insulter was the last feat that day of unconquerable love.

The policemen went out softly, and cast looks of manly pity behind them.

Soon after the stunning blow came the agony of an outraged, deserted, and still loving wife. But Deborah rushed in with Lucy in her arms, and forced the mother to embrace her child, then wreathed her long arms round them both, and they sobbed together. Honest Joe Pinder set his face to the wall, but there his concealment ended; he blubbered aloud with all his heart.

CHAPTER V.

The first burst of distress was followed by the torment of suspense: for several days, at Sarah's request, the friendly police watched the steamboats, to give her an opportunity of appeasing her burglar; and all this time her eye was always on the street by day, her ear ever on the watch for the music of the blackguard's step. She kept hoping something from paternal affection: why should he abandon Lucy? *She* had never offended him.

But in time proof was brought her that he had actually levanted in a sailing-vessel bound for New York.

I do not practise vivisection, and will not detail all the sufferings of an insulted and deserted wife — sufferings all the more keen that she was a woman of great spirit and rare merit, and admired for her looks and her qualities by everybody except her husband. Public sympathy was offered her: a Liverpool journal got the incident from the police, and dealt with it in a paragraph headed, "Every man his own burglar."

The writer of paragraphs, after the manner of his class, seasoned the dish from his own spice-box. A revolver was levelled at the auto-burglar by the wife's friend; but the wife disarmed him, a circumstance the writer deplored, and hoped that, should "sponsa-burglary" recur, even conjugal affection would respect the interests of society, and let the bullet take its course.

Pinder read out this paragraph or paraphrase, and translated the last sentence into the vulgar tongue. Then Deborah revelled in it. Sarah was horrified at the exposure, and indignant at a journal presuming to

meddle with conjugalia. To hear her, one would infer that if a blackguard should murder his wife, it ought to be hushed up, all matters between husband and wife, good or bad, being secret and sacred, and all indictments thereon founded, obtrusive, impertinent, and indelicate.

A great sorrow has often compensations that do the heart no good at the moment; but time reveals their importance, and that they would have been comforters at the time, could the sufferers have foreseen what was coming. This observation is not necessarily connected with trust in Providence; yet the good, who suffer, should consider man's inability to foresee the events of a single day, and also that they are in the hands of One before whom what we call the future lies flat like a map along with the past and the present.

Even my own brief experience of human life has shown me the truth and value of these lines, so comforting to just men and women:

> With steady mind thy course of duty run:
> God never does, nor suffers to be done,
> Aught but thyself wouldst do, couldst thou foresee
> The end of all events so well as He.

This story is not written to support that or any other theory; but as all its curious incidents lie before me, I cannot help being struck with the numerous conversions of evil into unexpected good which it reveals.

The immediate examples are these. In the first place, before this great and enduring grief fell on Sarah Mansell, Mr. Joseph Pinder had a natural but narrow-minded contempt for Mrs. Deborah Smart. He saw a six-months' widow husband-hunting without disguise. To put it in his own somewhat rough but racy language, she raked the town every night for No. 2. But when lasting grief fell upon Sarah, he saw this imperfect widow resign her

matrimonial excursions night after night, and exhaust her ingenuity to comfort her sister. Sometimes it was rough comfort, sometimes it was the indirect comfort of kindness and attention, but sometimes it was a tender sympathy he had never expected from so rough and ready a rustic. Thereupon Pinder and Deborah became friends, and as Sarah was grateful, though sad, this wove a threefold cord — a very strong one.

The second good result was one that even the mourning wife appreciated, because she was a mother, and looked to the future.

Seeing her deserted and in need of help, Joseph Pinder became her servant, and yet her associate. For a fair salary he threw himself into the business, and very soon improved and enlarged it. Tinned meats, soups, and fruits were just then fighting for entrance into the stomach of the prejudiced Briton. Joseph prevailed on the sisters to taste these, and select the good ones. They very soon found that amongst the trash there were some comestible treasures, such as the Boston baked beans, Australian beef briskets, and an American ox-tail soup; also, the pears of one firm in Delaware, and the peaches of another.

Pinder, who, like many workmen, was an ingenious fellow, had invested his savings in a type-writer, and he printed short notices, and inundated inns and private kitchens with the praises of the above articles, and personally invited many cooks and small housekeepers to the use of his cheap American soup for gravies. "Where," said he, "is the sense of your boiling down leg of beef for gravies and stews and things? Here are six rich stews, or hashes, for tenpence, and no trouble but to take it out of a can."

One day Sarah showed him, with sorrowful pride, James Mansell's "panels," as he called them. That

personage, before he took to drink, was an enthusiast in his art, and he had produced about fifteen specimens on thin panels two feet square. They were really magnificent. Joseph cleaned and varnished them; then caught a moderate grainer, and made him study them; then put one or two of them in a window, with a notice: "Graining done in first-rate style by a pupil of James Mansell." The trade soon heard, and gave the young man a trial. He was not up to the mark of his predecessor, but, thanks to the models, and Pinder overlooking his work, he was accepted by degrees, and so Mrs. Mansell drove her husband's trade and her own enlarged. Money flowed in by two channels, and did not flow out for "drink." Pinder's salary was not one-tenth part of the increase his zeal and management brought into the safe, and now there was no drunkard and auto-burglar to drain the wife's purse and tap the till.

In the three years whose incidents I have decided not to particularize, and so be tri-voluminous, not luminous, the deserted wife had purchased the little shop and premises in Green Street, and had four hundred pounds in the bank, Pinder having declared the London and County Bank to be safer than a safe.

Lucy Mansell was now over seven, and a precocious girl, partly by nature (for she came of a clever father and a thoughtful mother), but partly by living not with children, but with grown-up people. As she inherited her mother's attention, and was a born mimic, she seemed to strangers cleverer than she was. The sprightliness of Aunt Deborah naturally attracted this young person, and of course she admired what at any young ladies' school she would have been expressly invited to avoid — the by-words and blunt idioms that garnished Mrs. Smart's discourse.

Now, having faithfully, though briefly, chronicled the small beer, I come to the events of an exciting day.

Sarah sat at the counter sewing, and ready to serve customers. Lucy sat at her knee sewing, and ready to run for whatever might be wanted. Deborah came up from the kitchen with a rump-steak and some kidneys in her market-basket, and thrust them under her sister's nose. Deborah was a connoisseur of raw meat, luckily for the establishment, and admired it when good. Sarah did not admire it at the best of times, so she said, "I'll take your word."

"Do but feel it," persisted Deborah. Thereupon Sarah averted her head.

Deborah warmed. "Wait till you see it at table. I am going to make you a steak-and-kidney pudding."

"Oh, be joyful!" cried Lucy, and clapped her hands.

"Come, there's sense in the family," remarked Deborah; "and if your mother doesn't enjoy it, I give warning at the table — that's all."

"I'll try, sister," said Sarah, sweetly. "But you know an empty chair at the head of the table is a poor invitation to eat, and the stomach is soon satisfied when the heart is sad."

"That is true, my poor Sal; but, dear heart, is there never to be an end of fretting for a man that left you like that, and has never sent you a line?"

"That is my grief. I am afraid he is dead."

"Not he. He has got plenty more mischief to do first. Now I'm afraid you'll hate me, but I can't help it. 'The truth may be blamed, but it can't be shamed.' 'Twas the luckiest thing ever happened to any good woman when he left you, and you got a good servant instead of a bad master."

"If I only knew that he was alive!" persisted Sarah, absorbed in her one idea.

Deborah's patience went, and she let out her real mind. She had kept it to herself about eighteen months,

so now it came out with a rush. She set her arms akimbo — an attitude she very seldom adopted in reasoning with Sarah. "If so be as you are tired of peace and comfort, and money in both pockets, you put it in the newspapers as you have bought these premises, and got four hundred pounds in the bank, and you mark my words, Jemmy Mansell will turn up in a month; but 'tis for your money he will come, not for you nor your child."

This home-thrust produced a greater effect on Sarah than Deborah expected, for, as a rule, Sarah merely defended her husband through thick and thin; but now she was greatly agitated, and when Deborah came to that galling conclusion, she drew herself up to her full height, and said sternly, "If I thought that, I'd tear him from my heart, though I tore the heart out of my body. Perhaps you think because I'm single-hearted and loving, that I am all weakness. You don't know me, then. When I do turn, I turn to stone."

As she said this, her features became singularly rigid, and almost cruel, and as a great pallor overspread them at the same time, she really seemed to turn to marble, and the gentle Sarah was scarcely recognizable. Even Deborah, who had known her all her life, stared at her, and suspected she had not yet got to the bottom of her character. Lucy gave the conversation a lighter turn — she thought all this was much ado about nothing. "Don't you fret any more, mamma," said she. "If papa won't come home, you marry Uncle Joe."

Mrs. Mansell remonstrated: "Lucy dear, for shame!"

"'No shame, no sin;
No copper, no tin,'"

said Lucy. "Marry him bang! Here he is."

"Hush!" and Sarah reddened like fire.

Pinder opened the shop-door, and came briskly in for

business. "Good-morning, Sarah; morning, Deborah; morning, little Beauty. Made a good collection this time. Please open your ledger and begin alphabetical. B — Bennett, the new hotel, 3£ 13*s.* 6*d.* There's the money." Sarah wrote the payment off Bennett in the ledger. Pinder went on putting each payment on the counter in a separate paper. "Church, 1£ 5*s.*; Mr. Drake, 7£ 9*s.*"

"That's a he-duck," suggested Lucy.

"You're another, allowing for sex," retorted Pinder. "And now we jump to M — Mr. Mayor."

"That is a she-horse," remarked Lucy, always willing to impart information. Pinder denied that, and said it was the great civic authority of the town, and in proof produced his worship's check for 17£ 4*s.* "And now what's the news here?" he inquired.

"I'll tell you," said miss, with an obliging air. "Mamma and Aunt Deb have just had a shindy."

"Oh, fie!" cried Deborah. "It's you for picking up expressions."

"Then why do you let them fall?" said the mother. "It's you she copies. We only differed in opinion."

"And bawled at one another," suggested Lucy.

Deborah exclaimed, "Oh, for shame, to say that!"

Says this terrible child, "'The truth may be blamed, but it can't be shamed.' You know you did."

"It sounds awful," said Pinder, dryly. "Let us make 'em friends again. What is the row?" and Mr. Pinder grinned incredulous.

"Well," explained Lucy, in spite of a furtive signal from her mother, "mamma fretted because papa does not write; then *she* (pointing at Deborah, *malgré* the rules of good breeding) quarrelled her for fretting, and she said, 'You put it in the papers how rich you are, and he'll turn up directly.' Then mamma bounced up and

gave it her hot (Sarah scandalized, Deborah amused), and then it ended with mamma crying. Everything ends with poor mamma crying." Then Lucy flung her arms round her mother's neck, and Pinder suggested, "Little angel."

Sarah kissed her child tenderly, and said, "No — no quarrel. And do but give me proof that he is alive, and I'll never shed another tear."

"Is that a bargain?" asked Pinder, quietly.

"That it is."

"Just give me your hand upon it then." She gave him her hand and looked eagerly in his face.

He walked out of the shop directly, assailed by a fire of questions, to none of which he replied. The truth is he could not at present promise anything. But he knew this much; that Dick Varney had gone out to New York three months ago, and had been seen at a public-house in the neighborhood of Green Street that very day. Pinder got it into his head that Varney would most likely know whether Mansell was alive or dead. With some difficulty he found Varney. That worthy was dilapidated, so he was induced by the promise of a sovereign to come and tell Mrs. Mansell all he knew about her husband. The sly Varney objected to tell Pinder until he had fingered the money, and asked for an advance. This the wary Pinder declined peremptorily, but showed him the coin.

Thus distrusting each other, they settled to go to Green Street. But when he got to the door, Varney remembered the scene of the burglary, and the woman's distress; he took fright, and wanted to go back.

"No, no," said Pinder; "I'll bear the blame of this visit," and almost forced him in.

The family was still all in a flutter, and Deborah bearing her sister company in the shop. Though Sarah had

only seen Varney once, his face and figure were indelible in her memory, and at the sight of him she gave a faint scream, put both her hands before her face, and turned her head away into the bargain. "Oh, that man!" she cried.

"There," said Varney, "she can't bear the sight of me and no wonder." With this remark, the most creditable he had made for years, he tried to bolt. But Pinder collared him and held him tight, and for the first time this three years scolded Sarah. "Why, where's the sense of flying at the man, and frightening what little courage he has out of him, and shutting his mouth?"

"No, no," said Deborah, hastily, "if you can tell her anything about her man, don't you doubt your welcome Let bygones be bygones."

"I am bound to answer whatever *she* asks me."

"And I'm bound to give you this if you do," said Pinder. "Deborah shall hold it meantime." He handed over the sovereign to Deborah. Her fingers closed on it and did not seem likely to open without the equivalent.

During all this Sarah's eyes had been gradually turning round toward the man, and by a feminine change they now dwelt on him as if they would pierce him.

"You have been to New York?"

"Yes."

CHAPTER VI.

"Did you look for my husband?"

"You may be sure of that, and it took me all my time to find him."

"Find him! He is alive?"

"Alive! Of course he is."

"Thank God! thank God!"

She was so overcome that Pinder and Deborah came to her assistance, but she waved them off. "No," said she, "joy won't hurt me. Alive and well?"

"Never better."

"And happy?"

"Jolly as a sand-boy."

"A sand-boy?" murmured Lucy, inquiringly.

Sarah's next question was uttered timidly and piteously — "Did he ask after us?"

Deborah cast an uneasy glance at Pinder. She was sorry her sister had asked that, and feared a freezing reply.

"Rather," said Varney. "First word he said was, 'How is Sarah and the kid?'"

"Bless him!" cried Sarah. "Bless him!"

Lucy informed the company that a kid was a little goat.

But her innocence did not provoke a smile. They were all hanging on Dick Varney's words.

"And what did *you* say about us?"

"Oh, well, I could only tell him what I hear of all sides, that you are doing his trade as well as your own. That Joe Pinder is your factotum. That you are as rich as a Jew, and respected accordingly."

"You told him that?" said Deborah, keenly.

"Those were my very words."

"And he didn't come back with you?" she asked.

"No."

"Then he must be doing well out there?"

"I shouldn't wonder; he was dressed like a gentleman."

"And he looked like one, I'll be bound," said his devoted wife.

"He didn't behave like one, then, for he gave an old friend the cold shoulder."

"What a pity," suggested Deborah; "you that used to set him such a good example."

Pinder said that was not fair, and the man telling them all he could. Deborah said no more it wasn't, and if Mr. Varney would come with her she would cook him a bit of this nice steak.

He said he should be very glad of it.

"But mind, there's no brandy allowed in this house. Can you drink home-brewed ale?"

"I can drink anything," said he, eagerly.

She showed him into the kitchen, but whipped back again for a moment. "There's more behind than he has told *you*," said she. "I'm a-going to pump him." She ran off again directly to carry out this design, and very capable of it she was: just the sort of woman to wait for him like a cat, and go about the bush, and put no question of any importance till he had eaten his fill, and drunk the home-brewed ale, which tasted innocent, but was very heady. This manœuvre of hers raised some vague expectations in the grown-up people, but Lucy's mind, as usual, fixed itself on a word.

"Pump him?" said she to Pinder. "How will she do that, Factotum?"

"Not knowing, can't say," was Factotum's reply.

"Like this, Factotum?" said she, and took his arm

and pumped with it. "Good-by, Factotum," said she, for a new word was like a new toy to her; "I'm off to see the pumping."

Pinder laughed, and looked at Sarah; but not a smile. "Why, you are not going to fret again?" said he. "You gave me your word to be happy if he was alive."

"And I thought I should at the time. But now I know he is alive, I know too that he is dead to me. Alive all this time, and not write me a line! I insulted him, and he hates me. I'm a deserted wife."

"And I am a useless friend. Nothing I do is any use." He lost heart for a time, and went and took a turn in the street, despondent, and for the moment a little out of temper.

She watched his retiring figure, and thought he had gone for good, and felt that she must appear ungrateful, and should wear out this true friend's patience before long. "I can't help it," said she to herself. "I can love but one, and him I shall never see again."

Never was her sense of desolation so strong as at that moment. She laid her brow on the counter, and her tears ran slowly but steadily.

She had been so some time when a voice somewhere near her said, rather timidly, "Sally."

She lifted her head a little way from the counter, but did not look toward where the voice came from; it seemed like a sound in a dream to her.

"It is," said the man, and came quickly to her. Then she looked and uttered a scream of rapture, and in a moment husband and wife were locked in each other's arms.

At this moment Pinder, whose momentary impatience had very soon given way to compassion and pity, came back to make the *amende* by increased kindness; and Deborah, who knew every tone of her sister's voice, flew

up from the kitchen at her cry of joy. But in the first rapture of meeting and reconciliation neither spouse took any notice of these astounded witnesses.

"My Jemmy! my own! my own!"

"My sweet, forgiving wife!"

"It is me should ask forgiveness."

"No, no! 'Twas the police drove me mad."

"To leave me for three years!"

"Do you think I'd have stayed away three weeks if I had thought I should be so welcome?"

"What! you did not know how I love you?"

Then came another embrace, and at last Sarah realized that there were two spectators, one on each side of her, and those spectators not so much in love with the recovered treasure as she was. She said, "Come, dearest, joy is sacred," and drew him by both hands, with a deal of grace and tenderness, into the little parlor, and closed the door.

Pinder and Deborah looked at each other long and expressively, and by an instinct of sympathy met at the counter as soon as the parlor-door closed, Deborah very red, and her eyes glittering, Pinder ghastly pale.

"Well, Mr. Pinder," said she, with affected calm, but ill-concealed bitterness, "you and I — we are two nobodies now. Three years' kindness of our side goes for nothing, and three years' desertion don't count against him. I've heard that absence makes the heart grow fonder, and now 'tis to be seen."

Pinder apologized for his idol. "She can't help it," said he. "But I can help looking on. I've seen them meet, after him abandoning her this three years, and what I feel this moment will last me all my time. I won't stay to watch them together, like the devil grinning at Adam and Eve; and I won't wait to hear him say that this business I have enlarged is *his*, the trade

that he killed and I have revived is *his*, that the woman is *his*, and the child is *his*, and the money we have saved is *his*. No, Deborah, I'll give her my blessing and go, soon as ever I have put up those shutters for her, and it is about time. You will see Joseph Pinder in this place no more."

"What, you will desert her and all?"

"Desert her? That is not the word. I leave her when she is happy. I am only her friend in trouble."

"And not her friend in danger, then?"

"I see no danger just at present."

"Think a bit, my man. What has brought him home? Answer me that."

"Well, I can," said he. "There is plenty of attraction to bring any man home that is not blind and mad and an idiot."

"Ay," said she, "that is how you look at her; but it's him I want you to read. Why, it was three years since he left, but it's not a month since that Varney told him she was a rich woman, and here he is directly."

"Oh!" said honest Joe Pinder. "I see what you are driving at; but that may be accidental. Things fall together like that. We mustn't be bad-hearted neither. Why, surely he can't be so base!"

"He is no worse than he was, and no better, you may be sure. Crossing the water can't change a man's skin, nor his heart neither, and I tell you he has come here disguised as a gentleman for the thing he came for disguised as a burglar."

Here she tapped the safe with the key of the kitchen-door, which she had in her hand, and that action and the ring of the metal made her reasoning tell wonderfully. She followed up her advantage, and assured Pinder that if he did not stay and lend her his support, Sarah would soon be stripped bare and then abandoned again.

"If he does," said Pinder, "I'll kill him; that is all."

"With all my heart," was Deborah's reply. "But you mustn't leave *her*. And then," said she, "there's *me*. You that is so good-natured, would you leave me to fight against the pair? To be sure, I am cook, and my kitchen is overrun with rats; and one penn'orth of white arsenic would rid the place of them and the two-legged vermin and all."

Pinder was shocked, and begged her solemnly never to harbor such thoughts for a moment.

"Then don't you leave me alone with my *thoughts*," said she, "for I hate him with all my heart and soul."

The discussion did not end there; and, to be brief, Deborah had the best of it to the end. Pinder, however, was for once doggedly resolved to consider his own feelings as well as Sarah's interests. He would go; but consented not to leave the town, and to look in occasionally just to see whether Sarah was being pillaged.

"But," said he, "if 'tis all one to you, I will come to the kitchen, not the shop."

The ready-witted Deborah literally and without a metaphor licked her lips at him when he proposed this, so hearty was her appetite for a *tête-à-tête* or two in her own kitchen with this Joseph Pinder; he had pleased her eye from the first moment she saw him.

She said, "Well, so do. 'What the eye don't see the heart don't grieve.' Leave him the shop and you come in the kitchen."

With this understanding Pinder put up the shutters and went away, sick at heart. Deborah had half a mind to stay in her kitchen, so odious to her was the sight of her brother-in-law; and, besides, she was jealous; however, her courage was a quality that came and went. She was afraid to declare war on the pair, with nobody on the spot to back her. So she temporized; she took

Lucy into the parlor to welcome her father. The child said, "How d'ye do, papa?" in rather an off-hand way, and was kissed overflowingly. She did not respond one bit, and began immediately to fire questions: "Why did you go away so long, and make mamma fret? Why didn't you write to her, if you couldn't come?"

Sarah stopped the rest of the cross-examination with her hand, and told Lucy it was not for her to question her father. Deborah never moved a muscle, but chuckled inwardly.

"What will you have for supper, now that you are come?" inquired she, with affected graciousness.

"Anything you like," said James, politely. "Don't make a stranger of me."

That evening the reunited couple spent in sweet reminiscences and the renewal of conjugal ardor.

Before morning, however, they had talked of everything — at all events, Sarah had, and being grateful to Pinder, and anxious to make her benefactor and her husband friends, had revealed the results of Joseph's faithful service and intelligence — the shop purchased, and four hundred and forty pounds in the bank.

"At what interest?" inquired James.

"Oh, no interest. I am waiting to buy land or a good house with it."

James laughed, and said that was England all over — to let money lie dead for which ten per cent could be had in the United States on undeniable security.

When once he got upon this subject he was eloquent; descanted on the vast opportunities offered both to industry and capital in the United States; bade her observe how he had improved his condition by industry alone.

"But with capital," said he, "I could soon make you a lady."

"Lucy you might," said she, "but I shall live and die a simple woman."

Finding she listened to him, he returned to the subject again and again; but I do not think it necessary to give the dialogue *in extenso*. There is a certain monotony in the eloquence of speculation, and the sensible objections of humdrum prudence. I spare the reader these, having sworn not to be tri-voluminous.

It was about twelve o'clock next day when Pinder, whose occupation was gone, and *ennui* and deadness of heart substituted, found the time so heavy on his hands that he must come and chat with Deborah in her kitchen. He looked in; she was not there. So then he peeped in timidly at the shop-window, and there she was in sole possession of the counter. Her qualifications for that post were as well known to him as to the readers of this tale, so he looked surprised.

"Why, where are they all?"

"In Cupid's bower," said Deborah, repeating a phrase out of a daily paper. "Billing and cooing are sweeter than business."

"Where's Lucy?"

"You are the first that has asked. Well, she is asleep up-stairs. My lady found herself neglected first time this three years, so she came and cried to me, and I took her in my arms and laid her on the bed. She's all right. Pity grown-up people can't go to sleep when they like and forget."

At this moment the parlor-door opened, and Sarah Mansell, who had worn nothing but black these three years, emerged beaming in a blue dress with white spots, and a lovely bonnet, all gay and charming. This bright vision banished Deborah's discontent in a moment. "Well," said she, "you *are* a picture." Sarah stopped to be looked at, and smiled.

"Well," said Deborah, "he has found a way to make us all glad he is come home."

Sarah smiled affectionately on her, and said she only wished she could make everybody as happy as she was.

"Why not?" said Deborah, playing the courtier to please her. "And where are you going so pert, I wonder?"

"To the bank to draw my money," replied Sarah, gayly.

Pinder and Deborah looked at one another.

"How much of it?" asked Deborah.

"Four hundred pounds," said the wife, brightly.

Pinder groaned, but was silent. Deborah threw up her hands.

"O Sarah," said she piteously, "do but think how long it has taken you to make that, and don't throw it into a well all at one time."

Sarah smiled superior. "I affronted him about money three years ago, and you see what came of it."

She was going out jauntily, neither angry nor in any way affected by her friends' opposition, when Pinder put in a serious word.

"Well," said he, "give him a good slice. But do pray leave a little for Lucy. You are a mother as well as a wife."

She turned on him at the door with sudden wrath to crush him with a word for daring to teach her her duty as a mother; then she remembered all she owed him, and restrained herself. But what a look flashed from her eyes! And the hot blood mounted to her temples.

Pinder was quite staggered at such a look from her, and Deborah shook her head. They both felt they were nullities, and James Mansell the master again. He let them know it, too. He had been quietly listening on the stairs to every word they had said to his wife, and he now stepped into the shop and took up a commanding

position on the public side of the counter, opposite Pinder and Deborah. They were standing behind the counter at some distance from each other.

It was Pinder he attacked: said he, quietly, "Are you going to meddle again between man and wife? It didn't answer last time, did it?"

Pinder did not think it advisable to quarrel if it could be helped, so he said not a word.

But Deborah was not so discreet. "Why, you have allowed him to meddle this three years. *You* pillaged and deserted her; *he* interfered, and made her fortune. He doesn't meddle to mar."

Then Pinder spoke, but in a more pacific tone. "I don't want to meddle at all," said he. "But Deborah and I have done our best for you both, and I do think your wife's friends might be allowed to ask what is to be done in one day with the savings of three years." Before these words were out of his mouth Mansell registered a secret vow to get rid of him and Deborah both.

He replied, with the intention of galling them to the quick, "Well, I don't know that the master is bound to tell the servants what he does with his money."

"*Your* money?" snorted Deborah.

"Ay," said this imperturbable person. "My wife's money is mine. I thought I had made you understand that last time. Well, what I am going to do with my money is to invest it in American securities at ten per cent, instead of letting it lie idle in an English bank."

"Oh!" said Deborah. "That is the tale you have been telling her, eh? Well, I mean to tell her the truth. You are going to collar her money and off to America directly. Varney has been here, and split on you. You came for the money, not the woman."

She flung these words in his face so violently that even his brazen cheek flushed as if she had struck him;

but ere he could reply, Sarah stood aghast in the doorway. "Oh, dear! high words already."

Then James Mansell, who, in his way, was cleverer than any of them, recovered his composure in a moment, and said quietly, "Not on my side, I assure you. But this young woman says I have come for your money, not for you. That's a pretty thing to bawl at a man for all the street to hear. Well, Sarah, I don't bawl at *her*, but I put it to *you* quietly — how can I live in the same house with people that hate me, and are on the watch to poison my wife's mind against me?"

CHAPTER VII.

Pinder and Deborah both felt they had met their match. Pinder held his peace; but Deborah couldn't. Her lips trembled, but she fought him to the last. "I shall leave this house at one word from my sister; but not at the bidding of a stranger that's here to-day and gone to-morrow, as soon as he has milked the cow and bled the calf." With a grand sweeping gesture of the left arm she indicated Sarah as the cow, and with her right, Lucy as the calf.

The tremendous words, and the vulgar yet free and large gestures with which she drove them home, made even Pinder say, "Oh!" and so upset Mansell's cunning self-command that he came at her furiously. But Sarah stopped him. "No, you shall not answer her, James. You go and take your daughter on your knee, and I'll tell these two my mind." She was so grave and dignified there was no resistance.

Mansell retired with Lucy, and went up the stairs.

When he was quite gone, Sarah put out her two hands and said, sweetly, "Come here, you two." Then they each took a hand, and their eyes glistened.

She took them gently to task in silvery accents, that calmed and soothed them as they fell. "You have a true affection for me, both of you. Then pity me, too, and don't drive me into a corner. Do not make me choose between my husband and you; you know which I *must* choose. Why, dear heart, if I spent my money on my back, you would not grudge it me. Then why not let me please my heart, and give my money where I

give my love, that is worth more than four hundred pounds if you could but see it."

They were both subdued by her words. Deborah said, in a sort of broken, helpless way to Pinder, "She doesn't understand.

"What we mean is that if you part with your money, you will lose your man; but so long as you stick to your money, he will stay with you; and we have both seen how you can fret for him when he does desert you as well as bleed you."

"Ay," said Sarah, nobly, and without anger. "You mean me well; but you doubt, and mistrust, and suspect. No offence to either of you, but your nature is not mine. I am single-hearted. I cannot love and mistrust. Nor I could not mistrust and love."

The beauty of her mind and the sweetness of her strong but sober words overpowered her old lover and tender friend. "Don't harass her any more," said he. "She is too good for this world. She is an angel."

Deborah smiled, and after taking a good look at her sister, said, coolly, "She is a wonderful good woman; her face would tell one that; but she *is* a woman, you may be sure, like her mother before her. Sarah, 'tis no use beating about the bush any longer. Would you like that four hundred pounds to go to another woman?"

"Another woman?" cried the supposed angel, firing up directly. "What do you mean? What other woman?"

"Dick Varney saw him with a woman, and a handsome one."

"Well, what does that prove?"

"Not much by itself; but a man that leaves one woman for three years, at his time of life, is safe to take on with another."

"Oh!" cried Sarah, "don't tell me so."

But Deborah was launched. She said, "It's all a mystery, and against nature, if there's no other woman; but, if there's another, it's all as plain as a pikestaff. Three years' dead silence and neglect — another woman — you fretting in England — no other man — (Mr. Pinder is only a friend) — he jolly as a sand-boy in New York — another woman — *she* wants money (t'other woman always does) — Dick Varney tells *him* you've got it — he's here in one month after that, and the first day he is here he drains the cow. American insecurities? — A Yankee gal!"

This time her rude eloquence and homely sense carried all before them. Sarah, whose face had changed with the poison of jealousy, lost all her Madonna-like calmness. She was almost convulsed; she moaned aloud: "If it is so, Heaven help me!" She put her hand to her bosom, and her beautiful brown eyes half disappeared upward and showed an excess of white. "O sister, you have put a viper in my bosom — doubt. It will gnaw away my heart."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Deborah, terrified at her sister's words, and still more at her strange looks. Then she began to blame her woman's tongue, and beg Sarah to dismiss her suspicions with contempt. But this was met by another change, almost as remarkable in its way. "No," said Sarah, with iron firmness, "I could not love, and doubt, and live. I'll put it to the test." Deborah looked amazed and puzzled. Sarah walked to the parlor-door and called up the stairs, "James, dear, please come here." — "Whatever will she do or say?" groaned Deborah, and began to shiver. Sarah came back to her, and said, in a sort of hissing whisper, "Now, since you have taught me to suspect, and distrust, and doubt, you must go a little farther. I bid you watch my husband's face, and his very body, whilst I, that am his wife, play upon him."

She hung her head, ashamed of what she was going to do. But Deborah said, roughly, "Won't I — that's all."

James Mansell came in, and cast a shrewd glance all round. Deborah's face told him nothing. She wore an expression of utter indifference. Pinder hung his head.

Mansell was now between two masked batteries; his wife's eyes scanned him point blank, and Deborah watched him — like a cat — out of the tail of her eye, as Sarah tested her husband.

"James, dear, I have a great affection for my sister, and a true respect for Joseph Pinder, and I owe them both a debt of gratitude." James looked rather gloomy at that. "But I love you better than all the world. I can't bear to turn these faithful friends out of the house; they comforted me when I was desolate." Mansell looked dark again. "And yet I can't have you made uncomfortable for anybody. So, if my company is as welcome to you as my money, we will go to America together."

Pinder and Deborah both uttered exclamations of surprise and dismay, but Deborah's eye never left James. He was startled, but showed no reluctance. He merely said, "You don't mean that?"

"Indeed I do; but perhaps you don't want me. You would rather go back alone."

The four eyes watched.

"No," said James; "we have been parted long enough. But would you really cross the water with me?"

"As I would cross this room, if you really wanted me."

"Of course I want you, if we are not to live together here where your friends hate me. But, Sally, if you are game to emigrate with me, why make two bites of a cherry? We must sell the shop and realize, and settle in the States for life. I've no friends here, and you'll never want to come to England again, when once you have spent a summer in New York."

Here was a poisoned arrow. Deborah clasped her hands piteously, and cried, "O Sarah!"

Sarah put up one hand to her to be quiet.

"No," said she, as shortly and dryly as if she was chopping fire-wood, "I'll not fling my sister on the world, nor put all my Lucy's eggs in one basket. I will risk four hundred pounds and no more. I don't look to find the streets of New-York City paved with gold. Money must be lost by one for another to make it, and the folk out there are as sharp as we are — sharper by all accounts. Many go there for wool, and come back shorn. This shop is a little haven for us, if things go wrong out there. These good friends will keep it warm for us. Now I think of it, doesn't a boat start for New York this evening?"

"This evening!" cried Pinder and Deborah in one breath.

"Ay, this very night — before affection is soured by disputes, and love is poisoned by jealousies." Then she told James to put on his hat, and bring her word when the boat started. Lucy and she would be ready; she could pack all her clothes in half an hour, with Deborah to help. Thus the greater character asserted itself at last. She had seen with a woman's readiness that the present position was untenable for a day, and she had cut the knot with all a man's promptitude. From that hour she took the lead.

Deborah was wringing her hands and crying: "Oh, what have I said? What have I done?"

Sarah said, quietly, "Time will show. Please come and help me pack; and, Joseph, put up the shutters; I trade no more this day. Ah, well, I never thought to leave home; but no matter. A wife's home is by her husband's side."

Whilst they were packing, and Deborah's tears burst

ing out every now and then, Sarah said to her, a little haughtily, "Well, did he stand the test?"

"Yes," said Deborah, humbly.

"Do you think he would take me to New York if there was another woman?"

"No." (Very humbly.)

"But see," said she, sorrowfully, "what it is to rouse mistrust. I shall sew the notes into his Sunday waistcoat, but I shall not give them to him until we are on the sea."

Deborah began to say, "And why" — but she got no further. She ended with "I'm afraid to speak."

They got the man's Sunday waistcoat out of the drawer, and their quick fingers soon cut a deep inside pocket. Sarah took the numbers of the notes, and sewed in the notes themselves. They packed the waistcoat for the time being at the bottom of Sarah's box.

The packing was done two hours before the vessel sailed.

The whole party met again in the parlor — Pinder to bid good-by; but Mansell, to please his wife, I suppose, said, civilly, "No, no; come and see us on board. There let us part friends; the chances are you will never see us again."

These words fell like a knell on the true hearts Sarah Mansell left behind her.

Pinder and Deborah saw the Mansells go down the Mersey, and returned sadly to the house that had lost its sunshine.

That night Deborah, all in tears, begged Pinder not to leave her alone in the house. She said she could not bear to talk of anybody but Sarah; if she went out her friends would chatter about this, that, and t'other.

Pinder was of the same mind, and gladly embraced the proposal. She gave him his choice of Lucy's room

or the connubial chamber. He gave a little shudder, and chose Lucy's. He now became the master of the house and the shop, and had plenty on his hands. He taught Deborah the prices of things, and how to weigh and put up goods in paper, and that is an art; and at night he read her a journal or a book, and they talked of Sarah, and wondered and wondered what would be her fate. Deborah thought she would come back in about a year. The four hundred pounds would not last longer than that in Mansell's hands, and he would be sure to get hold of it. But Pinder thought she would not return at all. James Mansell was evidently jealous of her friends, and determined to have her all to himself.

There was a very good photograph of her, cabinet size: he took this to Ferranti, and had it enlarged, re-touched, and tinted by that artist. Ferranti, who employed a superior hand to retouch these enlargements under his own eye, produced a marvel. It had the solidity and clean outline of a statue.

They had it lightly tinted, especially the eyes and hair, so as not to injure the transparency of the photograph; and there was Sarah Mansell, full size, and all but alive.

It arrived, quite finished, rather late at night, and Pinder was out; but he opened the case and took it out, and neither he nor Deborah could go to bed for gazing at it. "I never knew how beautiful she was," said Deborah. They actually sat up till two o'clock looking at this reproduction of a good and beautiful face, and they descanted on her virtues, and Deborah told incidents of her childhood, and Pinder repeated wise and sober answers from her sweet lips.

Pinder now found himself gliding from bachelor life into half-matrimonial. His dinner was always ready on a clean cloth; and a comely woman, a year younger

than himself, cooked it, and put on a clean apron and cap to eat with him. They supped together, too. She gave up her nightly excursions after a husband, and was always at his service, and ready to talk to him or listen to him, or both; for if he read aloud police cases, or other things in which men and women revealed their characters and the broad features of human nature, her comments were as sagacious, especially in relation to her own sex, as if she had devoted her life to the study of philosophy.

Sometimes, too, she had a look of her sister. He never expected to see Sarah any more, and, take it altogether, he was on the road which, by a gentle incline, has often led the victim of a romantic attachment to a quiet union of affection.

When they were fairly out at sea, Sarah brought James his waistcoat, and showed him how the notes were secured. "You keep them," said she, "and I keep the numbers."

Mansell's greedy eyes flashed. "Well, you are a business woman: we shall never go wrong together."

The water was like glass for eight days, but then they had a gale, and Mansell was very ill. It was calm again as they drew near the end of their voyage, but Mansell did not regain his looks. When they reached the port he looked ill, pale, depressed, and worried.

They landed, and left their boxes on the pier, and James Mansell told Sarah and Lucy to stay there, whilst he ran into a neighboring street to see whether his old lodgings — very comfortable ones — were vacant.

She called after him not to be long. "Mind, I am strange here," said she.

"He won't be long, I guess," said a civil officer standing by: then he brought two chairs.

"Thank you kindly, sir," said she. "Lucy, my dear, thank the gentleman." Lucy took the two steps her dancing-master prescribed as essential preliminaries of a courtesy, and then effected a prim reverence: "Thank you, sir."

The gentleman, a tall, gaunt citizen from Illinois, grinned, and struck a bow, with his hat in his hand, at right angles.

Sarah watched her husband take the second street to the right and disappear. Then she took out some work, not to be idle, and Lucy prattled away, all admiration. Never had this brilliant city a more appreciative critic. To be sure, she had not learned the suicidal habit of detraction, thanks to which nothing pleases us, and so we pick up nothing.

An hour passed — two hours: James did not come back. Sarah was mortified, then she was perplexed, then she was alarmed. What if he had gone drinking? He seemed exhausted by the voyage. Once this fear took possession of her, waiting there idle became intolerable to her. She begged that civil officer to put their boxes aside for a time, and she took Lucy by the hand and followed in the direction her husband had taken. But as she walked for hours before she found her treasure, I ask leave to go before her to a certain street.

CHAPTER VIII.

Solomon B. Grace, the man who was so civil to Sarah Mansell on the pier, was, in his way, a rough and sturdy example of the species Pinder; and on his way to and from the custom-house, he used always to stand stock-still for two minutes and gaze at the windows of a house in Christopher Street, that belonged to one Elizabeth Haynes. Two minutes is not long for a busy man to spare to the past, and Solomon had never been detected at the weakness. But to-day Elizabeth Haynes caught sight of him as she put on her bonnet at a glass to go out, and when she did come out at the door, there he was gazing at the windows.

Mrs. Haynes was a handsome, gay young woman, of a genial disposition. She knew very well what Solomon was up to, but useless sentiment was not her line.

"Well," said she, feigning astonishment, "is that you, Mr. Grace, standing there like a petrified policeman?" Solomon was too confounded to answer. "Perhaps you want apartments;" and she pointed to the card in the window.

"Perhaps I wanted a sight of the lady that let's 'em."

"Then why not knock at the door and ask for the lady?"

"Wa'al, I guess rejected suitors ain't always the most welcome callers."

"Why not? If they behave themselves, do you really think any woman hates a man for having been a little sweet on her? Next time don't watch the premises, but walk right in and tell me the news from out West."

"Wa'al," said he hesitating, "ye see I don't want no fuss. Now there's somebody in that house that riles me. He has got a good thing, and doesn't vally it. He gambles away all your money, and he is never at home. You were married to one Illinois man, and he respected you and loved you; and what mad dog bit you that you must go and marry a stranger? You had the whole State to pick from."

"And Mr. Solomon B. Grace in particular! You forget I'm a stranger myself. I'm not annexed to your State."

Solomon admitted this, but said it was an oversight in the "Constitootion."

"Now this," said she, "is why rejected suitors are not welcome to prudent women and good wives: they must run down the man we have chosen, and behind his back, too, nine times out of ten."

"I'm darned if it isn't mean: as mean as dirt."

This concession seemed so creditable that she invited him to be her beau — as far as the market.

Solomon could not believe his good fortune. She laughed at him, and enlightened him: "Give me a fair excuse; do you think I wouldn't rather have a decent man beside me than take my walks alone? What a bad opinion you must have of woman's sense! I do suppose that gentleman you are named after knew 'em better. To be sure, he had six hundred teachers, poor man!"

"I would give his lot for my one."

"Solomon," said Mrs. Haynes, severely, "flattery is poison, so come on. I won't stand still to be poisoned." So she went shopping, and continued at it long after she had parted with Solomon B. Grace.

Mrs. Mansell wandered on and on, and then back, to and fro, Lucy prattling gayly, and almost irritating her,

until she turned hungry. Then her mother bought her a piece of pie with the only coin in her pocket, but could not eat herself. Night fell, the lamps were lighted; foot-sore, weary, and sick at heart, she could hardly draw her limbs along, and began to ask herself bitterly what she had done to be abandoned again and again by everybody. But in truth she was not abandoned by all; a wise and just Providence was guiding her every step. At last she stopped in despair, and began to speak her mind to Lucy, since there was no one else:

"It is inconsiderate; it is cruel," said she, "and me a stranger in this great city. Why couldn't he take me up with him to look for lodgings? O Lucy, my mind misgives me."

"Sit down on those steps, mamma," said Lucy, with pretty affection.

"Indeed, I shall be glad to rest a bit."

She sat down on the doorsteps, and thoughts tormented her she could not utter to Lucy. This must be their old enemy, drink. He had looked so pale and exhausted. Oh, if it was! Misery! for the habit once resumed, after so long abstinence, would never be got rid of. Here was a miserable prospect, and in a foreign land as well; no friends to curb him or stand by her. And then if he got drunk he would be robbed. How lucky she had sewed up the notes in his waistcoat! The money! Another chill thought went through her like an ice-bolt. Why had she parted with it? She had been warned that whilst she held it she held her husband. It was but a momentary horror. She dismissed that suspicion as unworthy and monstrous, and was ashamed of herself for harboring so base a fear.

Lucy saw the change in her distressed face, and came to a simple, comprehensive conclusion: "Mamma, he is a wicked man."

Sarah was shocked at this from her. "No, no, my child; he is a good man, and your father."

"Then fathers don't love us like uncles do. Uncle Joe would never have left us like this. I wish I had never left home."

Sarah would not say that; but she sighed deeply, and rocked herself, country fashion, sitting on the stone steps.

Mrs. Haynes came back to her tea, and found her in that condition, while Lucy, standing beside her, opened two glorious eyes with sorrowful amazement. For a moment Mrs. Haynes thought they were beggars, but the next her eye took in almost at one glance their dress and neat appearance, and Lucy's ear-rings, pearl and gold.

She asked Mrs. Mansell civilly what was the matter — was she tired?

Mrs. Mansell looked up and said, sorrowfully, that she was in care and trouble. She had lost her husband.

"What, dead?"

"Nay, Heaven forbid! But we parted on the quay. He went to look for lodgings, and he never came back. I don't know what to think, nor what to do, I'm sure."

"Dear me," said the other; "and you a stranger in the country!"

Sarah sighed.

"And it is late for the child to be out."

Sarah gave her a glance of maternal gratitude, and passed her arm round her child at the very idea of any harm threatening her.

Mrs. Haynes looked well at them both, and liked their faces even better than their appearance. She said good-naturedly: "You had better step in and rest yourselves awhile, and then we'll see."

"Thank you kindly, ma'am; I'm sure it is very good of you."

Mrs. Haynes opened the door with a latch-key and led the way to a back room of mixed character. There was a French bed in it with curtains descending from a circular frame. There was also a chest of drawers, and a sort of plate-chest on them; a large easy-chair, much worn; and a round table, with a white cloth on it — in short, it was an unpretending snuggery.

"There, take off your bonnets and make yourselves comfortable," said Mrs. Haynes. And while they were doing this, she whispered an order to her maid — her name was Millicent. Then she took cups and saucers out of a cupboard and wiped them herself; and they talked all this while, she and Mrs. Mansell.

A housekeeper's vanity is always on the alert the moment a possible rival comes; so, as Mrs. Mansell looked like a person with a house of her own, Mrs. Haynes said, "You mustn't go by this room; mine is a beautiful house, but I keep boarders, and it is so full, that I have to pig anywhere. It doesn't matter much, you know, when one's husband is away."

Lucy listened, and informed her mother, with some surprise, that the young lady was married.

"Why, bless the child, I have been married twice. The first was an Illinois man. Ah! he was a husband! This time it is Matthew Haynes, an Englishman. I can't show him you, for he has gone home to draw a legacy, and that takes time." She paused a moment to pour out the tea.

"Are you a New York lady, if you please?" inquired Sarah.

Mrs. Haynes, poising the tea-pot in the air, smiled at her simplicity. "No," said she. "Are *you?* Why, we both speak country English as broad as a barn-door. Bless your heart, I knew you for a countrywoman the moment you opened your mouth, and I shouldn't be

surprised if we came from the very same part. I be Wiltshire."

"And I'm Barkshire born and bred."

"Didn't I tell 'ee?"

Here Millicent came in with a large dish of fried oysters.

"You don't get such oysters as these in Barkshire, let me tell ye."

"That we don't. I never saw so many all at one time."

The hostess helped them liberally, and the wanderers enjoyed them to the full, and their eyes brightened, and the color came back to their faces, and when, like a true wife, Mrs. Haynes said, "Now tell me about yours," Mrs. Mansell was more communicative than she would have been to an older acquaintance.

"Oh, my man is an excellent husband. Indeed, he hasn't a fault that I know of, except he takes a drop now and then."

"Oh, they all do that at odd times," said the other, carelessly.

"And even that he has given up," said Sarah, earnestly. "Only he was so ill at sea, and exhausted like. How else to account for his behavior, I can't think; and you know they are sometimes obliged to take a glass medicinal."

"Ay, that is their chat; and 'tis the only medicine where one glass leads to another. There, don't you begin to fret again. You'll see yours long before I shall see mine." Then she observed that Lucy could not keep her eyes open. So she went farther than she had intended at first; she determined to let them sleep in the house. "Take your bonnets," said she, "and come with me." She opened one of two folding-doors, and showed them into a larger parlor, with a bachelor's bed in it. The carpet was up, and stood in a roll, but every-

thing was clean. "There, this room is let, but not till twelve to-morrow; you must excuse disorder. You put the little love to bed, and then we will have our chat out. Ah," said she, with a sudden change of manner that was sweet and touching, "I had a little girl by my first husband; she would be about the age of yours if I could have kept her alive; so my heart warmed to yours the moment I saw her standing beside you on my step, and her young eyes full of love and trouble."

Mrs. Haynes cried a little at this picture and her own sad reminiscences, and the happy mother kissed the sorrowful one, and she kissed her in return. Then Mrs. Haynes withdrew and summoned her maid, and she cleared away the things, and then they cleaned the cups and saucers and had a gossip, for Mrs. Haynes must have somebody to talk to. She was well educated, not like Deborah Smart; for all that, she never read a book now, and those who won't read must talk.

The folding-doors were thin, and did not meet very close; the new wood had shrunk: and Sarah, without intending it, heard a word every now and then, but she paid no attention. The first thing the careful mother did was to thrust her hand and arm all down the bed inside. It was perfectly dry; but being a native of this land of fogs and damp and prejudice, she resolved not to put her girl into it. She told her she should not undress her. So Lucy knelt at her knee, and said her prayers. When she had done, she asked if she might pray for the good lady.

"Ay, do, dear, and so shall I. It's all we can do for her." She pulled down the counterpane, laid Lucy on the blanket, and put a shawl over her. All this time she was thinking, and now her thoughts found vent. "My girl, is it not strange that those who are sworn to stay by us, and we by them, should fail us, and that a

lady who never saw our faces before should open her arms and her house to us, because we are strangers in a foreign land? God bless her!"

There was a loud knock at the street-door. It was followed by an eager exclamation from the other room: "O Milly! Why, sure that's my husband's knock."

"Oh! I hope it is," cried Sarah, as Millicent and her mistress dashed into the passage.

There was a moment of suspense, and then joyful exclamations in the passage.

"It *is*, Lucy; I am so glad," Sarah cried.

"So am I, mamma."

"This way! this way!" screamed Mrs. Haynes, pulling what seemed to Sarah to be rather an undemonstrative husband into her little room. "I must have him all to myself." Then there was a long and warm embrace.

Sarah was somehow conscious of what was going on. She sat down by Lucy, and said, a little sadly, "Ay, they are happy, those two." Then cheerfully, "Well, my turn *must* come."

Sarah Mansell did not hear exactly what was said next, but I will tell the reader.

Mrs. Haynes, who had now turned the gas up, was concerned at her husband's appearance. "La!" said she, "how pale you look! Sit down in your own chair. (He staggered a little, but got into the chair all right.) I'll make you a cup of tea."

"Tea be blowed!" said he roughly.

Sarah heard that where she sat, with her cheek against Lucy's. She started away from her, half puzzled, half amazed.

"Gimme — drop o' brandy," said the man, louder still.

Sarah bounded with one movement into the middle of the room, and then stood panting. Even Lucy raised herself on her hands in the bed, and her eyes opened wide.

"I doubt you have had enough of that already," was the reply in the next room. "Why, now I think of it, you must have come by the steamship eight hours ago. How many have you liquored with before your wife's turn came?"

"I don't know," said he, like a dog's bark, loud and sharp and sullen.

Lucy heard, and slipped off the bed to her mother, full of curiosity. "Why, mamma," said she, "that's" —

Before she could say the word, Sarah closed the child's mouth with her hand almost fiercely; then held her tight, and pressed the now terrified girl's face against her own body.

All the woman's senses were so excited that she heard through the doors as if they had been paper. And this is what she heard this man say, who was her husband and the husband of the woman that had sheltered her:

"If you *must* know, I was faint, and troubled in my mind, and just took one glass to keep my heart up and clear my head, and then one led to another. Never you mind. I'm a good husband to *you*, the best in England — no, the best in New York — the best in all the world; d'ye hear?"

"Yes," said the other wife, "I hear the good news; but please don't bawl it so loud." Then she whispered something.

Sarah caught her girl up like a baby, was at the bed in a moment, laid her on it, and dared her to move with such a look and such a commanding gesture as the girl had never seen before. Then hissing out, "I'll know all if it kills me," she glided back like a serpent to the door. She put her ear to the very aperture.

Matthew Haynes, *alias* James Mansell, lowered his voice. "You don't know the sacrifice, curse it all. One drop of brandy, for mercy's sake!"

"Only one, then." She gave him a glass. He gulped it down."

"Ah!—it is no use snivelling; I didn't mean to do it this way. But it was sure to come to this. I was in a cleft stick."

"Whatever is the man maundering about?" said Elizabeth. "O cursed liquor!"

The moment she raised her voice, he raised his. "D'ye want to wrangle? It isn't for you to grumble! *You* are all right. I'VE GOT THE FOUR HUNDRED POUNDS I WIRED YOU ABOUT!"

He uttered these words, not loudly, but very impressively, syllable by syllable.

And syllable by syllable they seemed to enter Sarah Mansell's body like javelins made of ice. The poor creature shrank altogether at first, and then slowly stretched herself out. Her arms strangely contorted themselves in agony, but at last spread feebly out, and her hands clutched vaguely, as if she was on a real cross, as well as on a cross of mental anguish; and when, after a few words of explanation, that told her nothing more, the other woman said, "Well, you are a good husband; I must kiss you," the limp body and drooping head of the true wife sank helpless against the door with a strange sound; it was gentle, yet heavy and corpse-like.

CHAPTER IX.

Doubleface, like others who have crime in hand, was startled by a sound the meaning of which he did not know. He thrust away his partner, and held her at arm's-length. "What is that?" said he.

"Only my lodger," said Elizabeth. "I'll go and see what she wants."

She stepped toward the door, against which Sarah was lying erect (I can describe it no other way), not insensible, but utterly limp and powerless to move, and indeed conscious that if she moved, she must fall headlong. At this crisis Doubleface turned jealous all of a sudden.

"No," said he; "bother your lodger! I'm the master. Attend to me first. Here, help me off with my coat and waistcoat.

"Now give me my dressing-gown.

"Now my shoes."

At last he rolled into bed. Now Elizabeth Haynes suspected her lodger of listening, and she thought it was too bad. She resolved to catch her.

She took off her shoes and stole on tiptoe from the bed to the door. At the same moment, Sarah Mansell, having nothing more to learn, made an effort to escape from her post of agony. She laid a hand on the projection of the door, and tottered a little way; from that to a chair which she clutched, and just as Elizabeth Haynes turned the door-handle she sank down by the bed, and seizing the clothes convulsively, she sank on her knees with her arms helpless before her, as the door opened and Mrs. Haynes peeped in. Then that lady thought

she was praying, and postponed her examination until the morning.

She was not so far wrong; for the first thing the betrayed wife did, when she had power, was to pray over her fatherless child. She prayed to God for hours, and I think He heard her. It did not appear so at first. In that horrible night she lived a life of agony. She thought of all she had done and suffered for that man, and she was the milch cow, and on the other side that door was the wife.

Three thousand miles from home — a deserted wife. If ever a woman lived a year of torture in a night, she did. It exhausted her body so that she actually fell asleep for half an hour.

She dreamed the events of years; but at last her ever-changing dream culminated in a vision. She saw before her her own little parlor. In it sat Deborah and Pinder looking at a picture. The picture had no features to her, but Deborah's face and Pinder's were quite clear, and beautiful with affection. They said it was *her* picture, as beautiful as herself, and they feared they should never see her again. She dreamed she wanted to comfort them, and say, "You shall — you shall," but her tongue was tied. The two faces then became angelic with affection, and vanished.

She awoke. She came back by degrees to her own misery. But how is this? The anguish that was so keen remains, but no longer pierces, stuns, galls, and maddens. It is blunted, and her heart seems turned to stone.

"Villain — drunkard — thief and traitor!" said she to herself. "All this time everybody knew him but me. I've shed my last tear for him. I've turned against him. I'm a stone."

She turned up the gas, and looked at Lucy. This

moment she became conscious, then, that Lucy had no longer a rival in her heart.

She resolved to leave the place at once.

Suddenly she remembered the money Doubleface got out of her to make Lucy's fortune, as he said. She stooped over Lucy and kissed her, too softly to wake her. "No, my fatherless girl," said she, "money is nothing to me now, but they sha'n't rob *you*. You shall have your own, if they kill me."

She sat down quietly, and thought what was the best way to execute the design she had conceived in a moment; and not every one of us would have hit upon the right order of action so well. She began by doing in her own room all that could be done there at all. She put a small table near the gaslight, laid her scissors on it, threaded a needle, and fastened it to her sleeve.

Then she went softly, opened one of the folding-doors, and satisfied herself that Doubleface and his other wife were asleep. Then she slipped into their room and turned up their gas a very little, found his trousers and his waistcoat under them, took away the waistcoat to her own room, and left the door ajar.

She brought the waistcoat to her table, cut the stitches, drew them away, took out the bank-notes, and put them in her bosom, all as coolly as possible.

Then she sat quietly down and sewed up the top of the pocket again, imitating the very number of the stitches she had originally put in.

Then she took the waistcoat, went into the next room, and put it back on the chair exactly where she had found it, and laid the trousers on it.

Then, having resumed her own, and no longer caring so very much whether she was caught or not by a man whom she could send to prison for bigamy, she actually drew the curtain back a little, and folding her arms, sur-

veyed the couple steadily with such an expression as seldom looks out of mortal eye. The husband lay on his back snoring loud, as he always did after excess. The other woman he had deceived lay on her side as innocent as a child, and sleeping like one.

The resolute woman who looked on stood there to be cured or die. Her flesh crawled and quivered at first, but she stood and clinched her teeth, and deliberately burned this sight into her heart, that she might never forget it, nor, by forgetting, be induced to forgive it.

Soon the day dawned, and a servant unbolted the street-door.

Then Sarah made Lucy get up in silence, both put on their bonnets, and she took the little girl through the other room, keeping her on her other side, so that she could see nothing, and walked out of the house without a word.

Late in the morning James Mansell awoke from a heavy sleep, and found himself alone in bed. He soon realized the situation drink had blunted over-night, and it frightened him. His thoughts were bitter. How drink had foiled all his cunning!

He had settled in his sober mind to play both women with consummate skill; not to go near Elizabeth in New York till he had settled Sarah in Boston, and stayed with her a month at least. What was to be done now? Why, snatch a mouthful, and then hunt after Sarah, and tell her some lie, and fly with her to Boston, and write Elizabeth another lie to account for his departure.

He burst through the folding-doors, and threw them both wide open for air. In the room his haggard face looked into sat Elizabeth, smiling and making his tea, and getting breakfast ready for him; her quick ear had heard him move in the bedroom.

"That's right," said he; "give me a morsel to eat. I must be off to the pier directly for my luggage."

"What, is your money and all down there?"

"Not likely. That never leaves me night and day."

"La! then you might show it to me," said she.

"Perhaps you don't believe I have got it," said he.

"The idea! Of course I believe your word." She filled him a cup of tea, and said no more. It was he who returned to the subject.

"Come, now, you'd like to see it, and make sure?"

"Why, Matthew," said she, "what woman wouldn't that had heard so much about it?"

"Here goes, then," said he, and took off his coat.

"What, in your coat?" said she. "Oh, dear! That is not a very safe place, I am sure."

"Guess again," said he. Then he opened his waistcoat, and showed her the inside pocket.

She peered across the table at it, and approved.

"I see," said she. "Who'd have thought a man had so much sense?" On reflection, however, she was not so pleased. "Who sewed it in for you?" said she, sharply. "I can see the stitches from here. 'Twas a woman."

"Well, then, let a woman unsew it," was all the reply he deigned; and he chucked her the waistcoat, and went on with his breakfast very fast.

She took the waistcoat on her knee, whipped her scissors out of her pocket, and carefully snipped the stitches; then opened the pocket, and groped in it with her fingers; "Well, but," said she, "there's no money here."

"Gammon," said he, with his mouth full.

She groped it thoroughly. "But I say there isn't," said she.

"Don't tell lies. Give it me."

She gave it him and watched him keenly, and even suspiciously.

He felt the pocket — groped it — clutched it — turned it inside out: there was nothing.

"What in Heaven is this?" he gasped. "Am I mad? Am I dreaming? It is impossible. Cut the thing to pieces! Tear it to atoms! Robbed! robbed! I'll go for the police! I'll search every woman in the house." And he started wildly up.

But Elizabeth rose too, and said, very firmly, "You'll do nothing of the kind; there are no thieves here. Now sit down and think."

"I can't; I'm all in a whirl."

"You must. Tell me the name of all the bars you drank at before you came here."

He groaned, and mentioned several.

"Were there any women about?"

"Plenty at some of them."

"Did you take your coat off?"

"Not likely. I tell you I felt them in my pocket before I went to bed."

"Ah! you thought so, perhaps. Now, who sewed them in for you?"

"No matter."

"Who sewed them in for you?"

"The tailor."

"No, Matthew, a woman sewed them in; and a woman sewed the empty pocket up again this last time. It is not a man's work, and, besides, men are not so artful as all that. There's more behind than you have told me," and she fell into a brown study.

Doubleface took his resolution in a moment. He would go to the pier, wait there till Sarah came for her boxes, and tell her he had been set upon and robbed. Then he would go away with her and work for a month, till she got more money from England.

So he told Elizabeth he would take the police to all those bars, and he went out hastily.

She made no objection; she sat there, and brooded over this strange mystery.

By and by she had a visitor — an unexpected one, and one she could speak her mind to on this subject more openly than to her husband.

Sarah Mansell, on leaving that house, asked her way to the pier. To her surprise it was very near. All her desire now was to get home. Her heart, always single, turned homeward entirely. Jealousy had tortured her too much. The torture that kills defeats itself, and her anguish had killed love as well as agonized it. And then she had her own special character; for women vary as men do: in some jealousy preponderates so that they cannot resign an unworthy man who belongs to them to another woman; in others jealousy, though terribly powerful, is curbed by pride and self-respect. These are the high-spirited women who will be the only one or none; and note this, the more they love a man the more they will have him all to themselves, or part with him root and branch: wild horses could not tear them from that alternative. These loving but resolute women belong to no class in society, and are found in every class. Books, journals, education, ignorance, neither make nor mar them. It is a law of their nature, though not the general law.

Sarah found that a steamer started for England that day. She instantly took a berth for Lucy and herself, and meantime she took her boxes away in a cab, lest James Mansell should come and find them there, and wait about for her. She did not fear him one bit; but she abhorred the sight of him now.

She directed a carman to drive her to any good hotel he chose, only let it be a mile distant.

James Mansell came to the pier, inquired for her

boxes, and found that his wife had removed them and gone to a hotel. The carman who took her had not returned, but a person James feed promised to ask him on his return to what hotel he had driven the lady. Then Mansell went back to get some money from Elizabeth; for he had drunk all his loose cash the day before.

The visitor she received meantime was Solomon B. Grace. He came in rather sheepishly, and began to plead her permission, but she cut all that short very brusquely.

"You come at the right time. I have been robbed of four hundred pounds."

Then she told him all that had passed between her and Matthew, and Solomon offered his theory, *videlicet*, that the notes had never existed.

"Well, then, I think they did," said Elizabeth. "But here's my trouble. There's a person I suspect; but I don't like to tell *him;* he might blame me for housing a stranger, and indeed it was a foolish thing of me — there! — I gave a night's lodging to an Englishwoman and her child. She said she had come by the steamer, and lost her husband. I am afraid she never had one. Anyway, she slept here in this very room, and, Solomon, whilst my man was telling me in there he had got me the four hundred pounds, she came bounce against that door, and I thought at the time she was listening."

"She is the one that did the trick," was Solomon's conclusion. However, to make sure, he asked if Mr. Haynes had told her where the notes were while the woman was listening.

"He must have," said Elizabeth. Then she thought a bit. "Why, la, no, he didn't. She could hear no more than I did, and certainly I didn't know, nor he didn't tell me until this morning, breakfast-time. There — she couldn't know — unless she had sewn them in, and that's

against all reason. It's a mystery; it is quite beyond me."

Solomon puzzled over it in turn. He said there was a good-looking woman sat waiting for her husband best part of two hours on the pier, and a child with her.

"A girl?"

"Yes, a girl."

"What had she on?"

"Didn't observe."

"What was the child like?"

"Darkish — beautiful black eyes — a picture!"

"That is them, I shouldn't wonder. You saw no husband, I'll go bail."

"Ay, but I did — saw his back, however. That one is no thief — a plain, honest woman, with a face something between a calf and an angel."

"Indeed," said Elizabeth, "she looked honest; and if her tale was true, it seems hard to suspect her. But it is a puzzle."

Then Solomon B. Grace summed up the evidence: "He drinks and gambles. One of those ways is enough. Such a man is soon eased of four hundred pounds in New York City. I've seen a many drained out here with dice and drink, but I never knew a fool's pocket picked of notes sewn into the lining. Puzzle or not, that's a lie, I swan."

The latter part of this summing-up was heard by Mr. Mansell from the parlor, he having slipped into the house the back way. He came in lowering, and put in his word. "Did you ever know an honest man slip into a house and backbite a man to his wife?"

Solomon turned red with ire and shame, for his position was not a perfect one. "Can't say ever I did, but I've known folk the truth was pison to wherever told."

"And the truth is that you are a discarded lover of my wife's, and a mischief-making hypocrite."

Elizabeth was alarmed, for she knew Solomon could wring this bantam's neck in a moment, and she had no blind confidence in his pacific disposition, though he vaunted it so highly. "La! Matthew, do you want every bone in your skin broken? And, Solomon, you must excuse him for my sake; he is in great trouble. I won't detain you at present."

"That means make tracks," said poor Solomon. "I'm pacific," said he, almost crying with vexation. "I'll go, sartin. I'd better go. But, Britisher" —

"Well, what is it, old Ohio?"

"A word at parting."

"In Chicagoan?"

"'Every dog has his day.' That's English, I rather think."

When he was gone, Elizabeth took a cheerful tone. She told James she did not for one moment believe he had drunk or gambled away four hundred pounds. "But," said she, "it is no use being angry with Solomon Grace for saying what all the world says." Then after a little while she played the philosopher. "If you gave me my choice, and said, 'Will you have four hundred pounds or a sober, industrious husband?' do you think I'd choose the money? Never. So don't let us cry over spilt milk, but just you drop gambling — you don't drink as you used — and we shall do first-rate. The house is full, and all the boarders like me. It always will be full now. Starting was the only trouble. I will undertake to keep you, if you will only spend your evenings with me."

James Mansell pretended to jump at these terms, and Elizabeth invited him to go out walking with her in an hour's time.

He agreed with feigned alacrity, and she dressed for the occasion, and they walked out arm in arm, she gay as a lark, he moody and distracted, and attending to her flow of talk only by fits and starts.

Meanwhile Mrs. Mansell and Lucy had a nice wash and a good breakfast, and by and by a conveyance was at the door to take their boxes to the steamer.

But Lucy was most unwilling. "O mamma!" she said, "we have only just come."

"I can't help that," was the dogged reply.

"But everything is so beautiful, and the people so kind: they call me 'miss.'"

"My child," said her mother, "I must go home. Wounded creatures all go home; and I am wounded to the heart. I have nobody now but you: be kind to me."

Lucy flung her arms round her mother's neck. "O mamma! I'll go with you to Jericho."

CHAPTER X.

It seemed as if everything was to be smoothed for their going home. At the docks they found Solomon B. Grace superintending custom-house work, and Sarah beckoned him, and asked him how she should get her boxes on board.

"Going home already? What, without your husband?"

"Sir, my husband has abandoned me."

"What, altogether?"

"Me and my child."

"The miserable cuss!"

Having thus delivered himself, he said it was his business to obey her orders. He couldn't leave that spot just then, but if she would give him the ticket, his mate should stow her things in the cabin. This was done accordingly. Meantime, he asked leave to put her a question.

"As many as you please," said she calmly.

"Where did you sleep last night?"

"With a lady who called herself Mrs. Haynes."

"Who lives in Christopher Street?"

"I don't know, unfortunately. But since you ask, perhaps you know that Mrs. Haynes."

"I rather think I do."

"That is curious."

"Well, no. I've known her nine years. Why, her first husband was a cousin of mine. When he died, I always intended to be number two; only I didn't like to ask her in the graveyard; but that 'ere Britisher warn't so nice; he slipped in ahead of me."

Sarah turned her brown eye full on him with growing interest. "I understand perfectly," said she. "You respected her most because you loved her best."

Solomon stared at her. He was utterly amazed, but at the same time charmed, at this gentle stranger reading him so favorably all in a moment, and reading him right. He asked her a little sheepishly if he might make so free as to take her hand. "You are very welcome, I am sure," said she, smiling calmly.

"I'll tell *you* the truth," said he, "though it's ag'in myself. I love her still; can't get her out of my head nohow."

"Why should you?" said she, loftily.

Solomon stared at that.

"It's like poor Joe Pinder," said she, half to herself.

"Can't say; don't know the family."

Sarah began to wonder. Presently she scanned him all over with her steady eyes: "I think," said she, slowly, "it must be my duty to write a note to Mrs. Haynes."

"About her housing you for the night?"

"About that and other things. You know her and respect her; will you give it her?"

"Of course I will."

"Into her own hand?"

"And glad of the job."

"Not into the hands of the man."

"What? her husband — the cuss — not likely."

Satisfied on that point, Sarah said she would like to go on board out of the bustle. She could write the letter in the cabin; it would be a short one. Then Solomon took her and Lucy on board. After some little preparation, Sarah took paper and an envelope out of her bag: she had everything ready to write to her sister. She sat down and wrote to the other wife of James Mansell. Solomon B. Grace had nothing else to do but to watch

her, and he did wonder what that thoughtful brow and white hand were sending to the woman he still loved.

It was no simple matter; the Englishwoman had a difficult task before her. She paused at every line. Her face was solemn, grave, and powerful. So the puzzle deepened. Solomon ould see this was not a woman writing merely to thank another for a night's lodging. When she had finished it, she folded it and secured it very carefully, and beckoned Solomon B. Grace.

He came to her.

"You will give this letter into her own hand, and see her read it?"

"I will; who shall I say it is from?"

"Sarah Mansell."

"Oh! Sarah Mansell. You are Sarah Mansell?"

"I am Sarah Mansell." Then she said, very thoughtfully, "This Mrs. Haynes, have you a real affection for her?"

"I am a bachelor for her sake, that is all," said he, despondently.

She fixed her eyes on him. "Perhaps some day you may be a married man for her sake."

Solomon shook his head. "Is that a *co*nundrum?"

"Well," said she, "the future *is* a riddle. What I am doing now proves that. Who knows? You have been very kind to me. Blessings come to those who are good to the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. Well, my child is fatherless this day, and I am a deserted wife, all alone on the great sea, with nobody but my child and my God."

Poor Solomon might have told her those two were more than seventy-seven bad husbands, but she went too straight for the tender heart that lay beneath his breast.

"Don't ye now, don't ye," he snivelled; "you'll make

me cry enough to wash a palace-car. You're not alone, you sha'n't be alone. Here, little beauty, come and comfort mother. Solomon B. Grace isn't much, but he'll stand by you till she starts, and then you must just keep your eye square for home, like that ship's cut-water there. You have got friends to home?"

"I have."

"You are loved to home?"

"I am, sir."

"Don't I tell you? They're waiting for you; they are thinking of you."

"They are. I saw them in a vision last night."

"It stands to reason; you was born to be loved."

"I thought so once, sir."

"I think so now, and I'm sure of it. You'd bewitch creation. Why, I'd cut myself in pieces to serve you. Darn me if I wouldn't take you safe to that ar island and hand you to your friends, and then slip back, if it warn't for the letter."

Leaving this good soul to comfort Sarah Mansell till the ship was cleared of strangers, I must go to meet a less interesting couple, who are coming this way.

As James took the walk merely to please Elizabeth, he went wherever she chose. They called at a provision shop and bought the things he liked. Elizabeth was handsome and well dressed, and many admiring glances were cast on her. Her companion's vanity was tickled at this. Only what rather spoiled the walk was that he longed so at that very moment to be raking the town for the other.

Presently they came out in sight of the quay, and James began to fidget again. He burned to get away from his companion to see if his agent had news of Sarah, and, besides that, he had a dread of open spaces — they facilitate surprises. Sarah might see him from

a distance walking with Elizabeth. This extreme uneasiness did not escape the latter. "Why, what is the matter with you now?" said she. "You keep looking about as if you had done something, and expected the police to pounce on you from every corner."

"You wouldn't be easy if you had lost four hundred pounds, and couldn't tell how."

"Yes, I would, if I could do without them. They were for *me*, but I don't fret, and why waste another thought on them, my dear?"

At this moment the steamer's bell rang. "There, now," said Elizabeth, kindly, "stay and see the ship start."

"Lend me a couple of dollars," said he. She gave it him directly. "Wait a bit for me here," he said, and Elizabeth seated herself in a sort of pleasant waiting room near the main entrance to the piers, and waited.

He darted into a shop and replenished his flask. Then he ran to find his agent, and got from him the name of the hotel Sarah Mansell had gone to. He was eager to go there at once, but dared not. Elizabeth had a temper. Doubleface was fairly puzzled between the two. However, it was only postponed for an hour. Elizabeth, with her house full of boarders, would not be out more than that, and then he would fly on the wings of penitence to Sarah, and not leave her for the other till he had humbugged her thoroughly and eradicated all suspicion.

So he came back to Elizabeth. She was sitting there quite at ease. "Curse it," said he, "she must go home."

But now ropes were cast off, and every preparation made for the vessel leaving. This is admirably managed in New York. The largest steamer just glides away into the Atlantic like a river-boat starting upon the Thames.

"Ah," said Doubleface, tormented by the situation he had created for himself, "I wish I was going in you —

alone." He stepped forward and saw her move away. She lay against the quay amidships, but she was so long that it took a minute before her after-cabin came opposite.

A woman, who had caught sight of James Mansell, but hidden herself till then, rushed along the deck to the poop, followed by a girl. She whipped a packet of notes out of her bosom, and brandished them high in the air to him, then drew her child's head to her waist.

That is what she did. But how can words convey the grandeur of those impassioned gestures, the swiftness of their sequence, and the tale that towering figure and those flaming eyes told to the villain and fool who had possessed her, plagued her for years, and hit upon the only way to lose her?

He started back, bewildered, blasted, terrified, and glared after her in stupid dismay.

While he stood petrified, a voice hissed in his ear, "You know — where — your — notes — are — now!"

It was Elizabeth at his shoulder, but a little behind him. Doubleface turned slowly, aghast with this new danger. He gasped, but could not articulate.

Elizabeth laid her right hand on his shoulder, and pointed to Sarah with her left. "Why, that woman is shaking them in your face!" Then she took him by both shoulders and turned him square to her. "Your face, that is as white as ashes!" In this position she drove her eyes into his, and clutched him firmly. "What is there between that woman and you? She has taken your money, yet she is not afraid. She vaunts it, and it's you that tremble. Oh! what does this mean?"

In her excitement she had grasped him so firmly that her nails hurt him severely through his clothes, but now that clutch relaxed, and she felt weak. "What does this mean?" she repeated.

The other creature, accustomed to lie, now tried to escape, hopeless as it seemed. He stammered: "I don't know. I saw a woman shake something or other at me — was it at me?"

"Who else?"

"I fancied she looked past me somehow. Where were you?"

"Behind you at the door."

"Could it be to you?" The desperate wretch hardly knew what he was saying. To his surprise this bold suggestion told.

"Why, of course it *might* be to me."

He seized this advantage artfully. "More likely to neither of us," said he; "and yet I don't know; since I came home everything that happens is a mystery."

"That is true, and I suppose I shall never know the meaning of it all."

"I'm as much in the dark as you are," said he, "and you can believe me or not, as you like." Then he took a step or two away to show her he was not disposed to quarrel with her. That answers sometimes when a body is in the wrong.

This stroke of policy left room for a third figure to step in between them, and that position was promptly taken by Solomon B. Grace.

"Letter from Sarah Mansell."

Doubleface turned with a yell, and made a grab at the letter. Solomon, who was holding it out with his right hand toward Elizabeth, stopped the rush with his left, and mocked the attempt. "No, yer don't," said the stalwart giant: "I'm under Mrs. Sarah Mansell's orders as this letter is not to be intercepted by any darned cuss whatever, but guv into the hands of Mrs. Haynes, and read before me to make sure."

Elizabeth stared, but hesitated to defy her husband before Solomon Grace. "But I don't know her," said she, looking at the letter in Solomon's hand.

"Yes, ye do — it's the lady that slept at your house last night."

Elizabeth uttered a little cry and panted. She almost snatched the letter now, and said, "Then she did listen at the door."

"Like enough," said James. "Then of course she'll know what to say to set us all by the ears."

"Yes, but," said Elizabeth, "she knows more than you ever told me that night. She knew where to find those notes — ay, those that hide can find. My fingers tremble; open it for me, Solomon."

He opened the letter, and handed it to Elizabeth, and dared James Mansell to interfere. Elizabeth read the letter very slowly, and piecemeal — read it how she could indeed; for her turn was come to have her bosom pierced.

MADAM, — You and I — are both unfortunate. You are betrayed, and I am deceived. If I tell the truth, I must pain you; if I withhold it, he will deceive you still. ["Oh, what is coming?" said poor Elizabeth.] The man that passes for Matthew Haynes [she stopped and looked at him, and read again] passes for Matthew Haynes — is James Mansell — my husband! [The reader held out her hand piteously to Solomon Grace; he supported her, and she held on to him, and that seemed to give her more power to read on.] We were married at St. Mary's Church, Glo'ster, on the 13th of July, 1873.

"That's a lie," said James.

"It does not read like one," was the dogged reply.

In 1878 he robbed me of my savings, and went to America. Last month one Varney from Liverpool told him I had money. He came for it directly, and took me with it — it was four hun-

dred pounds — sooner than not have it at all. Dear madam, I could not let my child be robbed. [There, I knew it — she took back her own.] But James Mansell is yours if worth keeping. [Are you worth keeping?] My door he never enters again. But if ever *you* should be as desolate as I was on your steps that bitter night, my home is yours. God help us both.

SARAH MANSELL,
13 Green Street, Liverpool.

"That is as clever a lie as ever woman told," said James Mansell.

Elizabeth replied, "It is God's truth! Sunshine is not clearer. So, then, I never had but one husband." She put both hands to her face and blushed to the throat. "You were his friend. Take me home." She clung piteously to Solomon. Then she turned to Doubleface. "In one hour my servant will give you your clothes on my doorstep. My door you never enter again."

"Mind that!" said the Illinois man. "I shall be there. 'Every dog has his day!'" With the word he tucked the resolute but trembling Elizabeth tight under his arm and took her home.

Doubleface cursed them both as they retreated. Then he rushed to the water-side, and the steamer was now all in sight, and Sarah Mansell still visible, standing over her child with her eyes raised to heaven.

Then the fool and villain raged and raved between the two superior women he had deceived and lost. Both too good for him, and at last he knew it — both in sight, yet leaving him forever, and he knew it. He raved; he cursed; he ran to the water's edge. No, he had not the courage to die. He took out his flask and went for comfort to his ruin — he drank neat brandy fiercely.

Then fire ran through his veins. He began not to

care quite so much. He drank again. Aha! He was brave. He defied them. He drank both their healths in brandy. He vowed to have two more as good as either of them. He drank on till his eyes set and he rolled upon the pavement. There the police found him dead drunk, and held a short consultation over him.

"Police cell?"

"No — hospital."

CHAPTER XI.

Joseph Pinder and Deborah Smart kept the home and the little shop, and were on those terms of gentle fellowship which often lead to a closer union when some stronger attachment ceases to interfere. When a month had elapsed they began to be very anxious to hear from Sarah; and one evening Pinder said if she had written the day she landed, or even the day after, they ought to have had a letter that very day.

"Oh," said Deborah, "he won't let her write to *us*. That is my trouble now — we shall never know whether she is dead or alive."

Pinder could not bring himself to believe that; so then they had a discussion. It was interrupted by the rattle of a fly drawing up at the door. Wheel visitors were rare at that house. Deborah thought the man had drawn up at the wrong door; Pinder said he would go and see; a knock at the door settled the question. Pinder opened it; and there, full in the gas-light, stood Sarah Mansell and Lucy. Pinder uttered a loud exclamation. She gave a little sigh of satisfaction, and put both hands on his shoulders. "Yes, my good Joseph, here we are, thank Heaven! O sister!" and she stopped Deborah's scream of amazement and delight by flying into her arms. The cab was paid, the boxes taken into the parlor, and then Sarah and Lucy were inspected and cuddled again.

Then came a fusillade of questions. "But what brought you back so soon? Did he change his mind? I never thought he would let you come back at all. And

looking like a rose; you are properly sunburned; but it becomes you — everything becomes my sister. Here's your picture; it has been our only comfort. Aren't you hungry after your journey?"

"Indeed I am."

"Bless you! And I could almost bless him for bringing you back in such health and spirits. There, you go up-stairs and make yourselves comfortable; your supper shall be ready in ten minutes. Oh, dear! I don't know whether I'm on my head or my heels for joy."

In due course the cloth was laid for five, and supper served.

"Will he be here to supper?" asked Deborah, with a laughable diminution of ardor.

"No."

"That is odd. Of course he will sleep here?"

"No."

At this Deborah and Pinder sat open-mouthed, and could hardly believe their senses. Sarah, brimful of health and in good spirits, yet her husband not with her. He could not be far off, thought Deborah.

"He is in Liverpool?"

"No."

"Then he is coming by next boat?"

"No."

"Well, I never."

"Let us welcome her, not question her," suggested Pinder; "she will tell us all about it when she chooses. It is enough for me to see her looking so well and so happy."

"Happy, because I am at peace, and because I have got back to two dear friends. Ah! I saw you both in my dream, sitting over that picture there and saying, 'We shall never see her again.'"

"O gracious heavens! and so we did," cried Deborah.

"I was sure of it," Sarah replied, "the vision was so plain."

Deborah's curiosity burned her; she could not help putting questions directly or indirectly. Sarah parried them calmly; then came a practical and somewhat delicate question. Deborah approached it indirectly.

"Since you went I was afraid to be alone in the house, and Mr. Pinder he has slept in Lucy's room."

Sarah saw at once what she would be at, and said, "Pray make no change for me. Lucy will sleep with me in the best bedroom. We shall both prefer it, shall we not?"

"Oh yes, mamma! I like to be with you day and night."

Deborah was charmed at the arrangement, and so was Pinder: he had expected to be politely consigned to some other dwelling. Deborah, however, must try once more to draw her sister.

"This is a blessed state of things," said she, "but I am afraid 'tis too good to last. He will drop on us some day, and turn us to the right-about."

Sarah would not utter a syllable in reply, and wore an impassive countenance, as she took no interest whatever in the speculation. It must be confessed this was enough to exasperate curiosity. "Well," said Deborah in despair, "will you answer me one thing? Has he collared the money?" Sarah put her hand to her bosom, and produced a bundle of notes. "It is all here except the travelling expenses," she said calmly.

"I am glad of that," said Pinder, "and for pity's sake don't question her any more."

Sarah smiled. "Don't be hard on her, Joseph," said she. "She must ask questions, being a woman, and one that loves me. But I'm not bound to answer them, you know."

"If she won't bear to be questioned, she shall go to bed, for I am dying with curiosity. Aren't you, Mr. Pinder? Now tell the truth."

"Well, I am," was the frank reply. "But I don't want to know everything all in a moment. I'd rather have her here and know nothing more, than know everything and *not* have *her*."

Deborah acquiesced hypocritically, because she had just remembered she could get it all out of Lucy. That young lady now showed fatigue, and the little party separated for the night.

"One word," said Deborah to Sarah in her bedroom. "Give me one word to sleep on. Are you happy?"

"Sister, I am content."

Deborah pumped Lucy. Lucy, to her infinite surprise, pursed up her lips, and would not say a word.

Her mother had made her promise most solemnly not to reveal anything whatever that had happened to them in New York.

Deborah writhed under this, but Pinder made light of it: and really there was plenty to balance the want of complete information. Sarah resumed her business: he was once more her associate, and his jealousy was set to sleep.

Her husband was not there, and no longer filled her thoughts. She never fretted for him; indeed, she ignored the man. The phenomenon was new and unaccountable, but certain. Joseph Pinder threw himself with more ardor than ever into her service, and persuaded her to seize an opportunity, and rent larger and better-situated premises in a good thoroughfare. Here their trade was soon quadrupled, and Sarah Mansell was literally on the road to fortune. By and by Lucy's health failed. It was "Pinder to the rescue" directly. He took a little villa and garden outside the town, and there

he established Deborah and Lucy with a maid-servant. Sarah slept there. Pinder had a room there, but generally slept on the old premises.

All this time he was making visible advances in the affection of Sarah Mansell. Indeed, that straightforward woman never condescended to conceal her growing affection for him. The change was visible on the very night of her arrival, but now, as the months rolled on, her innocent affection and tenderness for the friend who had suffered for her and loved her these ten years grew and grew. Deborah saw it. Lucy saw it. The last to see it was Joseph himself; but even he discovered it at last with a little help from Deborah. In truth, it was undisguised. The only mystery was how it could be reconciled with her character, for she was a wife, and the most prudent of women. Then why let Joseph Pinder see he was the man she cared for, and the only one? However, one day the exultant Joseph found there were limits. In the ardor of his affection he went to kiss her. She drew back directly: "Please don't forget I am James Mansell's wife." And for a day or two after that her manner was guarded and reserved. This was a warning to Mr. Joseph Pinder. A full and sweet affection visibly offered, but passion declined without a moment's hesitation. Joseph was chilled and disappointed for the moment, but what he had endured for her in less happy times reconciled him to the limits she now imposed. The situation was heavenly compared with those that had preceded it, and above all he saw nobody to be jealous of. He had also little auxiliary joys in the affection of Lucy and Deborah. These two, as well as Sarah, loved, petted, and made much of him.

How long this placid affection and sweet tranquil content — the most enduring happiness nature permits, if man could but see it — might have endured, I cannot

say, for it was cut short about ten months after Sarah's return by a revelation that let in passion and let out peace.

They did now a brisk trade with the United States; and one evening a new agent came from New York with liberal offers. This man happened to be a gossip and a friend of Solomon B. Grace. "'Mansell!'" said he (the name over the shop). "I could tell you a queer story connected with that name."

"It's not an uncommon name," said Pinder. "Was it James Mansell?"

"No; it was a woman, — a Mrs. Mansell. My friend Grace's wife — that is now — found her seated on a doorstep with a little girl: she said she had missed her husband. Mrs. Grace — at least, Mrs. Haynes, she was then — asked her in, and liked her so well she gave her her supper and a bed. Presently, home comes Mr. Haynes, her husband, quite unexpected. They had a hug or two, I suppose, and talked of their family affairs. And it seems this Mrs. Mansell listened, for next day this Haynes, as he called himself, missed four hundred pounds sterling that was sewed inside his pocket. There was a row: one said one thing, one said another. Then, let me see, what's next? Oh, I remember; what do you think? Mr. and Mrs. Haynes were watching the steamer starting for England. Doesn't Mrs. Mansell step on deck all of a sudden and shakes the missing bank-notes in both their faces" —

"Capital!" roared Pinder. "Go on! go on!"

"And it turned out she had only taken back her own, for this Haynes was no Haynes at all, but one Mansell, if you please, and had been taking a turn at bigamy."

"The scoundrel! Now I see it all."

"However, it didn't pay. Both the women sacked him, and Mrs. Haynes's friends wanted to imprison him.

But Solomon B. Grace said, 'Don't let's have a row. Marry me.' Mind, he had always been sweet on her. So she married him like a bird. Why, you seem quite fluttered like. Do you know the people?"

"I do. This very shop belongs to that same Mrs. Mansell."

"Do tell! How things come about! Then of course the story is no news to you?" said the agent.

"Yes, it is. She never mentions his name."

"No wonder. It must be a sore subject."

"Where is the villain? What has become of him? Any chance of his coming over here?"

"How can I tell?"

You may imagine the effect of this story upon Pinder. He went out to the villa hot with it, and glowing with love and pity for Sarah and rage at her husband. But during the walk he cooled a little, and began to ask himself if he ought to go and blurt out his information.

Sarah must have some reason for withholding it so long. Why, of course she was mortified, and would not thank him if he went and published it. Herein he misunderstood Sarah's motive: it was more profound, and the result of much thought and forecast. However, she will speak for herself. As for Pinder, he took a middle course: he confided it to Deborah, stipulating that she should feel her way with Sarah, and see how she could bear the truth being known.

Deborah acted on these instructions. But Sarah broke through them all in a moment, and told her the whole truth.

Next morning after breakfast she spoke privately to Pinder.

"So you have heard something about what parted James Mansell and me forever?" (She had divined at once it must have come through Pinder.)

"Yes, Sarah, to tell the truth, I have."

"Well, Deborah will tell you the whole story. It is not a matter I care to talk about."

"I would rather have heard it from you than from a stranger. Did you doubt whose side I should be on?"

"No, Joseph, not for a moment. If you must know, it was entirely for your sake I kept it to myself."

"For my sake? Why, it only makes my heart warm a little more to you. To think that such an angel as you should ever be deceived and pillaged!"

"And cured. Believe it or not, I am thankful it happened, and almost grateful to the man for undeceiving me before I wasted any more affection on such a creature. No, Joseph. I am single-hearted, as I always was, and my heart turned to you before ever you saw my face this time, and I kept that cruel story locked in my bosom for your sake. Ah, well! I was not to have my way. You know my condition now — neither maid, wife, nor widow — and I am afraid it will unsettle your mind, and this will not be the happy home it has been."

She sighed as she said this. He smiled at her wild apprehensions. But she was wise, and one that knew the heart of a man, and had forecasts.

CHAPTER XII.

The only difference it made at first was a slight increase of sympathy and respect on the part of Joseph Pinder. But this was followed by a more manifest ardor of devotion, and this in due course by open courtship.

Sarah thought it due to herself and her position to curb this. She did so with admirable address, sometimes playfully, sometimes coldly, sometimes firmly, always kindly; yet with all this tact the repeated checks made Pinder cross now and then.

She was sorry, but out of prudence would not show it. It ended in his begging pardon, and in her saying she did not blame him; it was the natural consequence of her situation, now that situation was declared.

As nothing stands still, this went on till the very thing Sarah had foreseen came to pass. The man after so many years of self-restraint, and so many good offices done, found himself at last rewarded with affection only. *That* was so sweet, that instead of satisfying him, it enticed him on; he longed to possess her, and asked himself why not. It was no longer either wrong or impossible. He implored her to divorce James Mansell and marry him. She received the proposal with innocent horror. "For shame!" she said — "oh, for shame!" and turned her back on him, and would hardly speak to him for some hours.

He took the rebuff humbly enough at the time. But afterward he consulted his friends, and they sided with him, and he returned to the charge. He pressed her, he urged her, he coaxed her, he did everything except remind

her of his own merits (and her own heart supplied that omission), but she would not yield. And the provoking thing was, she would not argue. Her old-fashioned religion and her old-fashioned delicacy despised reasoning on such a matter. He might almost as well have offered her reasons for bigamy. She was prejudiced and deaf to logic. The next time he attacked her she showed distress. "Ah," she said, "I foresaw this. Now you know why I kept my sad story to myself. I know the value of peace and pure affection, and I know that you or any man would demand more than I can give. I don't blame you, dear; but you will not forgive me; it is not likely." Her tears, the first he had ever made her shed, melted him. He kissed her, and begged her to forgive him. She sighed and said, "I suppose it is no use telling you what it costs me to deny you. You will never be easy now, but will never move *me*. I can't help it. I must trust in God."

Joseph Pinder told his friends it was no use; he couldn't move her; he only tormented himself and made her unhappy. Then one of them laughed in his face, and told him he was loving the woman like a calf, and not like a man. If she is really fond of you, be her master. She'll like you all the better, whatever she may pretend. You cut it for a year or two, and let her find out what you are worth.

Another told him he was being humbugged and made a convenience of. The woman was secretly hoping her husband would come back and eat humble pie. So what with passion, the sense of long service, instilled distrust, and wounded vanity, Joseph Pinder, after disquieting himself and Sarah in vain for six months, resolved to *make a change*. One Saturday night he packed up his carpet-bag, and announced that he should go next morning to Manchester, and thence to London.

"For how long?" asked Sarah, anxiously.

"Well, Sarah, for good, unless something happens."

Sarah said nothing; she understood in a moment that he intended to make a last attempt, and to go if she refused.

Next morning she went to church just as usual, and Joe Pinder awaited her return — with his *ultimatum.*

However, his feelings were subjected to some little trials before she came home.

It was a glorious day.

Lucy and Deborah sat out in the little garden. He finished packing his bag, and then went down to say a last word to them. He found Deborah with red eyes, and silent too — very unusual things with her. She and Lucy had evidently been talking the matter over, for Lucy asked him plump why her mother would not marry him. He replied, sullenly, "Because I don't deserve it, you may be sure."

"That is a fib," said Lucy, severely. "Well, if she won't, you had better marry me. Anything is better than being cross."

"You must grow up first," suggested Deborah.

"Or I must grow down," said Pinder.

Then he took Lucy on his knee, and being in no humor for jest, he said, "I had set my heart on you for a daughter. A wife I might find, but a daughter like you, all ready to love me — a regular rosebud! Ah, well!"

Lucy, precocious in all matters of sentiment, gushed out directly, "You shall, you shall. Why, now I think of it, I want a father. I never much liked the other one. But I like you, Uncle Joe — I mean Father Joe. There, I love — I adore you." She spread her arms supernaturally wide, and threw them round his neck with an enthusiastic rush.

"Little angel," said the affectionate fellow. "Well,

Lucy, I'll try for you, but I suppose it is no use. Yes, Deborah," said he, "I'll go for my bag, and a few minutes will decide."

Deborah could not blame him, for she knew that if she'd been a man, she could not have been so patient as Joe Pinder had been. There was a wicket-gate at the back of the garden, and Sarah now appeared at it. She had risen in the world. Both she and Deborah were dressed in rich black silk dresses, but with no trimming or flounces. Being tall, they showed off the material all the more. Sarah had a white French bonnet and neat gloves, but, relic of humility, she carried her prayer-book in her hand.

Deborah sent Lucy in-doors, and went to meet her sister. "O Sarah," she said, all in a hurry, "do mind what you're about. Joe Pinder's blood is up. I think it is his friends that jeer him."

Sarah sighed, "What can I do?"

"You can't do nothing, but you can say a deal. Why, what is a woman's tongue for? Tell him anything, promise anything. La! I wish I was in your place — he should never leave me."

Before Sarah could answer, Pinder appeared at the door with a large carpet-bag. He put it down on the steps. Deborah ran to him.

"O Joseph," she said, pathetically, "what should we do without thee? And look at the garden — not a flower but you planted, and 'twas you laid the turf. Joe, dear, don't believe but she loves you with all her heart. She never could love two since she was born, and you are the *one*."

"That remains to be seen," said the man, firmly; and he looked so pale and so dogged Deborah had little hope he would give in. He came to Sarah; she was seated in a garden-chair waiting bravely for him. He stood in

front of her. "I've come to know your mind once for all."

"I think you know my mind," she said, gently, "and I'm sure you know my heart."

"No, Sarah, I don't, not to the bottom."

"Perhaps not. Women-folk were always hard for men to understand. Never heed that. Speak your own mind to me, dear Joseph."

And Pinder said he was there on purpose. "But first," said he, "let me put a question to you. I'm almost ashamed to, though."

"It is no time to be afraid or ashamed," said she, solemnly. "Let me know all that is in your heart — the heart that I am losing."

"No, no," said Pinder, "not if you think it worth keeping. Well, Sarah, what I am driven to ask you is, what can any man do to earn a woman more than I have done? I have loved you honestly these ten years. I was true to you when you didn't belong to me. I tried to serve your husband for your sake — a chap I always disliked and despised. You found him out at last, and parted with him. Then I hid my mind no longer."

"It never was hidden from me."

"Since you came back alone I have courted you openly. You don't forbid me. You almost seem to return my love."

"Almost seem! I love you with all my heart and soul. I never loved as I love you, for I never esteemed."

"Ah! If I could only believe that!"

"You may believe it. I never told a lie. My heart turned to you when I saw you in my dream, and thought of your long fidelity and no reward. My poor Joseph, my heart turned more and more to you as the ship sailed homeward, and you were the one that made coming home seem sweetest to me. Where are your eyes? Since I

came home have I ever regretted the creature I used to pine for? (She put her white hands to her face, and blushed.) Women don't *make* love as men do, but they *show* it in more ways than men do, to those who will but see it."

"Then show me a little love — real love. Make me your husband!"

"How can I?"

"Easy enough. Divorce that villain, and marry me. It is a plain case of desertion and infidelity. You can get a divorce for the asking."

"What! Go to law?"

"Why not? It's done every day by your betters."

She colored faintly, and said with gentle dignity, "My superiors, you mean. They do a many things I can't, besides painting and powdering of their faces. Me go to a court of law to part those that were joined till death in a church? That I could never do."

Pinder got angry. He belonged to a debating club, and he let her have it accordingly. "That is all superstition. The priests used to tell ignorant folks that marriage was a sacrament, and only the Pope of Rome could annul it. But we are not slaves of superstition and priestcraft nowadays. Marriage is not a sacrament; it is a contract, no more, no less. Your husband has broken it contrary to law, and you have only got to dissolve it according to law. Wouldn't I divorce a faithless wife for you? And you would do as much for me, if you loved me as I love you."

"I love you better," said she; "by the same token, I couldn't quarrel with you as you do with me. Oh! pray, pray don't ask me to go into a public court, and say I only come to be freed from a wicked husband, and then have to own another man is waiting to take me. Ah! if you respected me as I do you, you couldn't" —

"I have respected you these ten years, and I've shown it. Now it is time to respect myself. I'm the laughing-stock of my friends for my calf-love."

"Ah!" cried she in dismay, "if they have been and wounded your vanity, it is all over. A man's love cannot stand against his vanity. But oh! if they knew how you are loved and respected, they would be ashamed to play upon you so. Dear Joseph, be patient, as I am. Believe that I love you better than you or any man born can ever love me. You are so agitated and so angry, you frighten me, dear. Do but think calmly one moment: what is the best thing in holy wedlock, after all? Is it not the respect, and the tender affection, and the sweet company? What husband is more cherished than you, or better loved? My sister loves you; my child loves you; I love you dearly. If you could but see us when you are away, how dead-alive the place is, and we all sit mumchance; but the moment you come we are all gay and talkative. You are our master, our delight, our very sunshine, and is *that* nothing?"

Joseph Pinder drank the honey with glistening eyes, but he could not quite digest it. He said these were sweet words, and there was a time when they would have charmed his ears, and blinded him to the hard truth. But he was older now, and had learned that woman's words are air. It is only by her actions you can ever know her heart.

"James Mansell," he said, "is a man of my age. 'Tisn't likely we shall both outlive him. So when you say you will not divorce him, that is as much as to say you will never be my wife till he is so obliging as to die. What is that but treating me like a calf? I won't die a bachelor to please James Mansell, nor any woman that clings to him *for life*. I will leave this, kill or cure."

Sarah objected firmly to that: "No, Joseph, if we are

to part, it is for me to go and you to stay. This pretty house and garden I have enjoyed so, 'tis the fruit of your industry, and your skill, and your affection, that I cannot recompense as you require, and so you will call me ungrateful some day, and break my heart altogether. My dear, you must oblige me in this one thing: you must live here, and send me back to my little shop, and let me see you get rich, and make some woman happy that will love you better than I do. You loved me most when I stood at that little counter in Green Street, and didn't even pretend to be a lady." She began steadily enough, but, with all her resolution, her voice failed, and she ended in tears.

"No, Sarah, you are not going to get it all your own way. Lucy loves me, and would be my daughter to-morrow. I won't hurt her; and I could not let you go back to Green Street. I'll take nothing with me but my carpet-bag, and my pride, and the heart you have worn out."

Then Sarah began to cry in earnest.

"O Joseph," said she, in accents to melt a stone, "is it not sorrow enough to part? Can you part in anger? I wouldn't be angry with *you* if you were to kill me."

"Part in anger?" said he. "Heaven forbid! Forgive me, my darling, if I have spoken a harsh word; and give me your hand at parting." He put out his hand, she seized it, and kissed it passionately. He kissed hers as tenderly, and their tears fell fast upon each other's hands. But he was a man, and had said he would go. So he actually did tear himself away, and catch up his bag, and through the wicket-gate; and such was his manly resolution and his wounded pride that he went thirty — or at least twenty-five — yards before he wished himself back upon any terms whatever. Till now he never knew now much she loved him.

As for Sarah, she did not attempt to deceive herself or any one else. She laid her brow on the little table, and sobbed piteously. Deborah came running to her, and took off her bonnet the first thing, for why should she spoil that as well as break her heart? But while saving the sacred bonnet, she was trying to comfort the heart.

"How could he leave you? How could you let him? It will kill you."

"Perhaps not. I trust in Heaven."

"Don't cry like that, dear," sobbed Deborah. "He will come back in a month or two, and then you will give in to him."

"No. I can only cry for him, and trust in my Redeemer, as I did when that creature played me false. I didn't trust in vain. Bring me my child."

Deborah put Lucy on her lap, and Sarah fondled her and cried over her. Presently what should Deborah see but Joseph Pinder at the wicket-gate with his bag. She ran to him all in a hurry and whispered, "Not yet, ye foolish! you mustn't come back for a week; then she will be like wax."

"I'm not coming back at all," said Pinder, loud and aggressively. "It is only out of civility. Lady and gentleman from America looking everywhere for her." Then he held the gate open, and beckoned to a lady and gentleman. They appeared, and at his invitation passed through the wicket.

Now Sarah had ears like a hare. She heard every word, and her smile of celestial love and just a little earthly triumph at Pinder's voice and self-deception was delicious; only, as she had been crying, she could not face these visitors all in a moment, but dried her eyes and tried to compose her features. Just then Pinder pointed her out in silence, and Solomon B. Grace walked

gravely down the garden, and drew up stiffly at her right hand. Mrs. Grace also moved toward Sarah, but hung back a little. There was an air of solemnity about them both. Pinder, instead of retiring again, crept down a little way with his bag, and a swift exchange of words passed between him and Deborah.

"You came out of civility: what are you staying for?"

"Curiosity," snarled Pinder.

As soon as Mrs. Mansell saw Solomon Grace she said eagerly, —

"Oh, my good friend, you here? Welcome!" She put out both hands to him.

He took them, and said gravely, "We bring you serious news."

At the sound "we," Sarah turned, and there was Mrs. Grace. She welcomed her just as she had done her husband. Lucy made a school courtesy to both of them.

There was a hesitation. Grace and his wife looked at each other.

"Yes, you can tell her," said Elizabeth.

Sarah Mansell eyed them keenly. "Yes, you can tell me: whoever is false to me is dead to me from that moment."

She half divined the truth. Some women can read faces, manner, incidents, all in a moment, and put them together. This was one.

"Yes," said Elizabeth, "I am glad you are prepared for it. James Mansell is no more."

Then Grace handed her the certificate of Mansell's death.

Mrs. Grace resumed: "He died in the hospital, and he died penitent, begging forgiveness of those he had injured. Mrs. Mansell, I stood by his bedside and pardoned him."

"And so do I," said Sarah. "I forgive him with all my heart, as I hope to be one day forgiven;" and she raised her pious eyes to heaven.

Whilst this was going on, Deborah came behind Pinder, who was listening gravely to every word, and quietly took the bag away out of his hand, and then his hat; both of these she handed to the servant-girl, and bade her hide them. Susan took the hint in a moment. Thus disarmed, Joseph sat meekly down in a chair at some distance, and Lucy immediately seated herself on his knee, with an arm round his neck. Sarah parted for the present with her American friends, but took their address, and in due course entertained them hospitably.

But this was a solemn day, and though she scorned to feign a single particle of regret, yet she felt it was not a day for conviviality. When she had bidden the Graces "good-by" at the wicket-gate, she walked slowly toward the house. Then, looking askant, her eye fell on Pinder, with Lucy on his knee. She stopped and looked at them.

Just then the servant came out into the porch and announced dinner.

Sarah smiled sweetly on the pair, and said, "Come, my dears."

They both came; Joseph very humbly. But Sarah never uttered one syllable of comment on his temporary revolt. He, on his part, tried his best to make her forget their one quarrel. But that was quite unnecessary, and she let him see it. She never thought him in the wrong, but only thought herself in the right, and she never showed him even the shadow of resentment or exultation.

She was "Singleheart," and she loved him.

When, after waiting a decent time, he threw out a

timid hint that he hoped he might call her his own before so very long, she opened her eyes, and said, "*Whenever you please, dear. I'm only waiting your pleasure.*"

He was amazed. But that did not prevent his catching her to him with rapture.

In the ardent colloquy that followed this embrace he said he had been fearing she would demand a year's delay.

"Not I," said she; "nor yet a month's. To be sure, I have my own old-fashioned notions of *decency;* but when it comes to ceremony, I would not set up such straws against *you*, not for one moment. What is etiquette to me? I am not a lady." [I am not so sure of that as she was.]

So they were married off-hand, and she soon showed Joe Pinder whether she loved him or not. All he had ever dreamed of love never came near hers. His happiness is perfect; and ten times the sweeter that he waited for it, pined for it, lost it entirely, earned it again, gained it by halves, then enjoyed it to the full.

To the world they are just thriving traders, very diligent and square in business, but benevolent; yet their private history is more romantic than the lives of nineteen poets in twenty.

Deborah is courting diligently. One Sunday afternoon Lucy, nodding over a good book, yet fitfully observant, saw her wooed by three eligible parties in turn over the palings. Then Lucy asked her which she was going to marry.

"How can I tell?" said she.

"Are they all three so very nice?" inquired Lucy slyly.

"They are all three nicer than none at all," was Deborah's reply.

LUCY'S LAST.

"Aunt Deb, I don't think you will ever be married."

"That's good news for me. And why not?"

"Because marriages are made in *heaven*."

Now it is not for me to predict the future; but from my observations of the Lucy Mansells I have known, I should expect to find that young lady at seventeen excessively modest and retiring, but as stupid as an owl.

GOOD STORIES OF MAN AND OTHER ANIMALS.

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THE PICTURE.

PART I.

I AM now seventy, and learning something every day, especially my ignorance. But fifty-two years ago I knew everything, or nearly: I had finished my education. I knew a little Greek and Latin, a very little vernacular, a little mathematics, and a little war: could march a thousand men into a field, and even out of it again, — on paper. So I left Paris, and went home to rest on my oars.

Months rolled on; I still rested on my oars, — rested on them so industriously that at last my mother, a very superior woman, took fright at my assiduous inactivity, and bundled me out of the boat.

She had an uncle who loved her, and, indeed, had reared her as a child. She wrote to him, concealing neither her maternal pride nor her maternal anxieties. He replied, "Send the boy here, and if he is anything like you, he shall be my son and successor." He was a notary, and had a good business.

In due course the diligence landed me far from home, at a town in Provence. A boy and an ass were waiting for me. On these beasts of burden I strapped my effects, and the quadruped conducted us by a bridle-road through

groves and by purling streams to a range of hills at whose foot nestled my uncle's villa, lawn, garden, and vineyard. The contrast was admirable. The hills, with their rocky chasms, were bold, grand, and grim; and the little house, clothed with flowering creepers, the velvet lawn, watered twice a day, and green as emerald, and the violet plums peeping among the olive-colored leaves, were quietly enchanting. "Oh," thought I, "what a bower for a hard notary!"

The hard notary met me with open arms, embraced me, held me out, gazed at me, said, in a broken voice, "You are very like your darling mother," and embraced me again. I was installed in a pretty bedroom with a bay-window, curtained outside by a magnolia in full bloom; pigeons cooed outside every morning an hour before breakfast, leaves glistened with dew, and flowers diffused sweet smells.

Next day my uncle took me into the town to his office, and introduced me to his managing clerk as his partner and successor. He left me under charge of this worthy while he pursued his real vocation, *bric à brac.* He was so unfortunate as to pick up a great bargain, a vile old jug: he itched to be home with it; so I had no time to master my new business that day.

The good curé dined with us, and my uncle presented us both to him, jug and nephew, especially jug; but the curé was impartial, and took a gentle interest, real or fictitious, in us both. He was a man of learning and piety, and had seen strange and terrible things in France: had known great people and great vicissitudes, though now settled in a peaceful village, "*post tot naufragia tutus.*" He was a gentle, amiable soul, a severe judge of nothing but cruelty and deliberate vice, and a most interesting companion if you chose; by which I mean that he had neither the animal spirits nor the vanity which makes

a man habitually fluent, but, if you could suspend your own volubility and question him, a well of knowledge.

My uncle had two servants: Catherine, a tall, gaunt woman, tanned, hollow-eyed, and wrinkled, and Suzon, a pretty, rosy, bright-eyed maid. Her my uncle ignored. Catherine was his favorite, — a model of industry, fidelity, and skill; besides, she resembled antique mugs, etc., whereas little Suzon was more like modern porcelain, Provence roses, and such like ephemeral things. Suzon was always in the background, Catherine always to the fore. She cooked the dinner, yet she must put on an apron and a cap of the past and wait upon us, even when the curé or a stray advocate from Paris was our guest, and Suzon would have done us credit. Ere long this latter arrangement became grievous to me, for I fell in love; and this gaunt creature came between me and the delight of my eyes. It was my first attachment. I had seen a good many pretty girls, and danced with them; but I thought them frivolous, and they took me for a pedant. I was a poet, and aimed high. Accordingly, I fell in love with a picture, or with the goddess it represented.

My uncle's dining-room combined the *salon* and the *salle à manger*. It was very long and broad, and the round table devoted to meals could be placed in any part of the room. Eight could dine at it, yet there was room for it in the great bay-window; and it ran smoothly upon little wheels instead of casters: so did all the chairs, ottomans, fauteuils, and sofas. Chinese vases five feet high, and always filled with flowers, guarded the four corners of the room; vast landscapes were painted on the walls, and framed in panels of mellow oak; many pieces of curious old plate glittered on the sideboard; a large doorway with no door, but an ample curtain of blue Utrecht velvet, led into a library of

choice books splendidly bound, many of them by antique binders, the delight of connoisseurs. Over the mantelpiece of the dining-room hung a picture in an oval frame, massive, and carved with great skill and simplicity; this frame had been chipped in places, and there was a black-looking hole in the right border, and some foreign substance imbedded.

The picture was a portrait (life size) of a young lady resplendent with youth and beauty, the face oval and forehead pure, the lips and peeping teeth exquisite, and the liquid gray eyes full of languor above and fire below that arrested and enchanted. The dress had, no doubt, been selected for pictorial effect, for the waist was long and of a natural size, and the noble bare arms adorned only with dark-blue velvet bands, which set off the satin skin.

Soft sensations and vague desires thrilled me as I gazed on this enchanting picture, and I longed and sighed for the original.

The gaunt Catherine at dinner-time kept getting between me and my goddess, and I hated the sight of her, and said she purposely interposed her hideousness between me and that divine beauty. But now, having had fifty years to consider the matter, I think she stood behind her master's chair whether there was a love-sick dreamer at the table or not, and was intent on her duties, not my dreams.

After I had thoroughly absorbed this lovely creature's perfections, and satisfied myself that her character was as noble, arch, and lovable as her features, I found it difficult to go on living without ever hearing her enchanting voice, or kissing her hand, or, at all events, some portion or other of her dress. So I asked my uncle timidly for her name and address.

The answer was discouraging: "How should I know?

I bought her for the frame, you may be sure: it is what the fools call *rococo; that* means admirable."

"And so it is, now I look at it," said I; "but O uncle! what is that compared with the divine effigy?"

"Divine fiddlestick!" said he. "Look at her little finger, all out of drawing."

Here was a notary against whom it could not be urged, "*de minimis non curat lex.*" Why, I could hardly help laughing in his face.

"Her little finger!" I cried. "Look at her lips, her teeth, her eyes — brimful of heaven!"

"That inspection I leave to you, young man," said my uncle calmly; "but I should like to know what that black mark *in the frame* is."

"And so you shall, uncle," said I with the ready good-nature of youth; and thereupon I jumped on a chair, and from the chair alighted like a bird on the mantel-piece, and my uncle ejaculated and trembled — for the wood-work, not me. I examined the hole in the frame and found a substance imbedded. I took out my penknife, nearly fell on my uncle's head, recovered myself with a yell, cut a small slice off the substance, and reported, "Uncle, it is lead, — a bullet, a big one. There, now, O base world! Ah, sovereign beauty, your charms have well-nigh cost your life! Some despairing lover, whom she esteemed but could not love, or likelier still, some rival crushed under her charms, has committed this outrage. Oh! oh! oh! There are some golden hairs attached to the bullet. Horrible! horrible!"

"Malediction on the fools!" cried my uncle. "Why could they not fire at the daub and spare the frame?" He added, more composedly, that evidently some mob had attacked the house during the troubles, and one of the savages had fired at it out of pure ruffianism.

"No, no," said I; "that does not account for these

golden hairs. O uncle, who is she.? I will travel all France if necessary. Do but tell me where I can find her."

"How can I tell what churchyard she lies in? Why, it is fifty years since such frames were made in this now tasteless country."

"Cruel uncle! do not say so," cried I in piteous accents. "Ah, no; they found a quaint old frame to act as a foil to her youth and beauty. I will copy her. I will make an etching of her: I am rather skilful in that way. I will send impressions all round France: I will solicit information. I shall find her. She is single: she has not found her peer in my sex. Is it likely she would? I will surround her with homage: I will tell her how I pined for her and sought her, and found her first because I loved her best. I will throw myself at her feet; I will kiss the hem of her sweet robe, I will — Gone!"

Gone he was, in mid-tirade, with his hands in his pockets; he escaped my juvenile eloquence, and I heard him whistling.

I loved her all the more, and lived for our first rapturous meeting.

In due course another idle attempt was made to refrigerate my immortal love; this one came from that old hag Catherine. I used to set my easel after breakfast, and work nearly all day reproducing the beloved features. One afternoon I could not stop for anything. Catherine came in and pottered about, laying the cloth for dinner. That was hard, but I thought it harder when suddenly her voice jarred upon my amorous soul with a calm observation: —

"Is not that a waste of time?"

I looked up, amazed at such an interference.

"I mean," said she, "that we do not need another picture of *her*."

"I FIND IT IS BEAUTIFUL," SAID SHE CALMLY.

"*You* don't, I dare say; female beauty is not to your taste; but the world requires a great many pictures of this peerless creature; and the world shall have them, whether you like it or not." Catherine shrugged her shoulders, and said the world could do very well without them. "And for my part," said she, "I cannot think what you see so admirable in that face."

"Look at it without envy, hatred, or malice, if you can, and then you will see."

Thus brought to book, the grim creature folded her arms and gazed on the portrait in a dignified and attentive manner that surprised me. "I find it is beautiful," said she calmly.

"What a discovery!"

"The beauty of youth and health, and rather good features."

"What a concession!"

"But I search in vain for the beauty of the soul. With youth should go modesty and humility; but here I see vanity and self-sufficiency."

"And I see only a noble pride, tempered with such sweetness and archness. There, instead of running her down to me, when you might as well blacken the morning star, I should be truly grateful to you if you would help me find out where she lives. Alive she is; my heart tells me so. Death, more merciful than envy, has spared those peerless features."

Catherine stared. "Who is she? why, what does that matter to you? She is old enough to be your grandmother; look at the frame."

"Malediction on the frame! You are as bad as my uncle. He bought her for the frame. *She* is not old; she never will be old; such beauty is immortal. Now tell me, my good Catherine. I dare say you have lived in this district all your life — Gone!"

It was too true; the servant, like the master, had escaped my enthusiasm, and left me to my theories. But I painted on and loved my idol in spite of them all, and held fast to my determination to discover her by publishing her features from Havre to Marseilles.

One day my uncle received a very welcome letter. It announced a visit from an old fellow-collegian of his, a highly distinguished person, a statesman, an ambassador and peer of France — the Comte de Pontarlais. This thrilled me with excitement and curiosity. I had never sat at the same table with an ambassador. Only I feared our way of living would seem very humble, and worst of all, that Catherine would wait at table, and get between his excellency and our one peerless gem, the portrait of my divinity.

I was all in a flutter as the hour drew near, and looked out for a carriage with outriders, whence should emerge a figure striped with broad ribbon and emblazoned with orders.

Arrived with military precision an elderly gentleman on a mule, with a small valise carried by a peasant. He was well dressed, but simply; embraced my uncle affectionately; and they walked up and down the grass, arm in arm, to be as near one another as possible, since they met so seldom. From the lawn they entered the library; and I was going thither somewhat shyly to be presented, when Suzon met me in wild distress.

"O Monsieur Frédéric! what shall we do? Here's Catherine been ailing this three days and scarce able to get about, and the master ordered a great dinner, and she *would* cook it, and not fit to stand, and she fainted away, and now she is lying down on her bed more dead than alive."

"Poor thing!" said I. "Well, you must get a woman into the kitchen, and you put on your best cap and wait."

"Since *you* order it," said Suzon, demurely, and lowered her eyelashes. Now, this extreme deference had not been her habit hitherto.

Encouraged by this piece of flattery, I added, "And please stand behind *my* chair to-day instead of my uncle's. It is not that I wish to give myself importance" —

"The idea!" said Suzon.

"But that — ahem! — his excellency" —

"I understand," said Suzon; "you wish *me* to have a good look at him — and so do I."

So may a man's best motives be misinterpreted by shallow minds.

The next moment I entered the library, and was presented, blushing, to his excellency. He put me at my ease by his kindliness and quiet, genial manner. To be sure, such men have a different manner for different occasions. He had long studied with success the great art of pleasing. Under this charming surface, however, I could see a calm authority, and in those well-cut features Voltairian finesse.

By and by Suzon announced dinner, and I took that opportunity to say that poor Catherine was very ill, and his excellency would have much to excuse.

His excellency interrupted me. "My young friend, trust to my experience. Company is spoiled by service; the fewer majestic and brainless figures stand behind our chairs, the better for *us*. The most delightful party I can remember, everything was on the table, or on a huge buffet, and we helped ourselves and helped each other. Why, the very circumstance loosened our tongues, that formality would have paralyzed. We puffed all the dishes, to which we invited our fair *convives*, and told romantic stories about them, and not a word of truth." Thus chatting, he entered the *salle à manger* and was about to take the seat my uncle waved him to, when he suddenly

started back, with an ejaculation, not loud but eloquent, and his eyes fixed upon the portrait of my idol.

The very next moment he turned them with a flash of keen and almost suspicious inquiry upon my uncle; then quietly seated himself at the table, and his host, good man, observed nothing.

For my part, I was trembling with curiosity all dinner-time, and longing to ask the great man if he had seen some living beauty who resembled that portrait; but I was too shy. My eyes kept travelling from him to the portrait and back, but I said nothing. However, his quick eye must have detected me, for, after dinner was over, and Suzon ordered to make the coffee, his excellency, who was peeling a pear very carefully, looked steadily at *me*, and said, "May I ask how that portrait came here?"

"Oh, yes, monsieur le comte," said I. "My uncle bought it in a *bric-à-brac* shop."

My uncle hastened to justify his conduct — it was the frame which had tempted him. "However," said he, "the picture, incorrect as it is — just look at that little finger! — has found a rapturous admirer in my nephew there, who, you may have remarked, is very young."

"It has," said I stoutly. "It reflects her beauty and her expression, and no bad picture does that. I'd give the world to find out the artist, for then he would tell me where I can find the divine original."

"That does not follow," said the count dryly; "these fair creatures keep in one place during the sitting; but in the course of the next forty years or so they consider themselves at liberty to move about like the rest of us."

"Oh, of course," said I; "but such beauty must leave traces everywhere. I am sure, if I knew who painted the picture, I could find the original."

"I will put that to the test," said his excellency. "Come, now — I painted the picture!"

I bounded off my chair with the vivacity of youth, and stood staring at our guest with all my eyes. "You!" said I, panting.

"Astonishing!" said my uncle. Then calmly, "That accounts for the little finger."

"For shame, uncle!" said I. "It's a masterpiece. Ah, sir, you must have been inspired by — Who is she? Who was she?"

"She was my betrothed!"

PART II.

I STARED at the speaker, first stupidly, then incredulously, then with a growing conviction that the marvellous revelation was nevertheless true; then my uncle and I, by one impulse, turned round and looked at the picture with a fresh gush of wonder; then we turned back to the count again and glared, but found no words.

At last I managed to stammer out, "Betrothed to *her*, and not married!"

"Strange, is it not?" said the count, with a satirical shrug. "Permit me," said he, with ironical meekness, "to urge in my defence that I have not married any one else."

I said I could well understand that.

"Pooh!" said my uncle; "he has been taken up with affairs of state."

"That is true," said his excellency; "yet, to be frank, my celibacy is partly due to that fair person. She administered a lesson at a time of life when instruction deeply engraved remains in the mind forever."

"Tell us all about it," said my uncle, "if it is not a sore subject."

"Alas! my friend," said Monsieur de Pontarlais, "after forty years, what subject is too sore to handle? Even the tender poets versify their youthful groans. I will tell the whole story — not to you, on whom it will be comparatively wasted, but to my young friend opposite. He is evidently fascinated by my fair betrothed, and her eye enchains him — as it once did me."

I blushed furiously at this keen old man's sagacity, but stood my ground, and avowed the rapturous interest I felt in a creature so peerless.

Then came to me a bewitching hour. An accomplished old man told us a thrilling passage of his youth, with every charm and grace that could adorn a spoken narrative. The facts struck so deep that I can reproduce them in order; but the tones, the glances, the subtle irony, the governed and well-bred emotion — where are they? They linger still like distant chimes in my memory, and must die with me.

"I was born," said Monsieur de Pontarlais, "when parents married their children, and the young people had hardly a voice. At ten years of age I was betrothed to Mademoiselle Irène, only daughter of the Marquis de Groucy, my father's fast friend. Between that period and my coming of age great changes took place in France, and a terrible revolution drew near. But my father made light of all plebeian notions, so did his friend; and, indeed, if they had listened to anything so absurd as the new cry of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity seemed to them, it would not even then have occurred to them to depart from the rights of nature; and was it not one of those rights that parents should christen, educate, confirm, and marry their children when and how they thought proper?

"Accordingly, at twenty-one years of age, my parents sent me into this very province to marry and make acquaintance with Mademoiselle de Groucy. The marquis, a tall, military figure, bronzed by the suns of Provence, met me with his gun slung at his back. He embraced me warmly, and his dogs barked round me with the ready cordiality of sporting dogs. I felt at home directly.

"The marquis and I dined *en tête-à-tête;* I was anxious to see my bride, but she did not appear. After dinner we adjourned to the *salon,* but she did not appear. I cast timid glances toward all the doors; the marquis observed, and rang a bell, and ordered coffee and his daughter. The coffee came directly, and while we were sipping it a female figure glided in at the great door, and seemed to traverse the parquet by some undulating movement which was quite noiseless, though everybody else clattered on the floor at that epoch.

"Instead of the high shoes, bare neck, and short, slight waist of the day, she was in rational shoes, and a loose dress of India muslin that moved every way with her serpentine figure, and veiled without hiding her noble arms and satin bust. As she drew nearer, her loveliness dazzled me. I rose and bowed respectfully. Her father apologized for this model of symmetry and beauty.

"'Be pleased to excuse her dress,' said he. 'It is my fault; they came roaring at me with news of a wild boar, and I forgot to tell her who was coming to-day.'

"I said I did not pretend to judge ladies' dresses, but thought the costume beautiful. I suppose my eyes conveyed that I knew where the beauty lay. The young lady edged quietly away, and put her father a little between us; but there was no tremor, nor painful, blushing shyness.

"Afterward, at her father's order, she poured me out a cup of coffee with the loveliest white hand I had ever seen; and though reserved, she was more self-possessed than I was.

"The marquis invited me to a game of piquet. I was off my guard, and consented. The beauty saw us fairly engaged, then glided out of the room, leaving me a little mortified with myself as a wooer; for at twenty-one years of age nature prevails over custom, and we desire to please our bride even before we marry her.

"Next day, M. de Groucy, who was a mighty sportsman, invited me to join him; but with some hesitation and confusion I said I was very desirous to pay respect to my *fiancée,* and to show her how much I admired her already.

"My host thanked me gracefully in his daughter's name, intimated that in his day marriage used to come first, and then courtship, but said I was at liberty to reverse the order of things if I chose: it would all come to the same at the end.

"On this understanding I devoted myself to wooing my beautiful betrothed. She gave me no direct encouragement, but she did not avoid me. She was often in her own room; and out of it she was generally guarded by a stately *gouvernante,* one Mademoiselle Donon. But this lady had the discretion to keep guard a few yards off, and I treated her as a lay figure. These encounters soon destroyed my peace of mind, and filled all my veins with an ardent passion for the peerless creature whose dead likeness hangs there — and it really is a likeness; but where are the prismatic changes that illumined her mobile features? And all of them, even scorn and anger, were beautiful; but each softer sentiment divine.

"Unfortunately, while she set me on fire she remained quite cool; though she did not avoid me personally, her

mind somehow evaded mine on nearly every topic that young people delight in. She listened with polite indifference to all my descriptions of Paris and its gayeties; and when I assured her she would be the acknowledged belle of that brilliant city, she said, quietly, that it would not compensate her for the loss of her beloved mountains; and she turned from me to the window and fixed a long, loving look upon them that set me yearning for one such glance.

"She rarely contradicted me, but that must have been pure indifference, for she never doubted about anything; I soon found out that trait in her character.

"One day a local newspaper related a popular outrage in our neighborhood. The rude peasants, in their political ardor, had sacked and destroyed a noble château.

"'Where will this end?' said I. 'Will revolutionary madness ever corrupt the simple, primitive people one meets about this château?"

"'Why, it is done already,' said my host. 'Emissaries from Paris, preachers of anarchy, are wriggling like weasels all through the nation, with books, and pamphlets and discourses teaching the common people that all titles are an affront to the ignoble, and all hereditary property a theft from those who have no ancestors. (Wait till a peasant gets a landed estate, and then see if his son will resign it to the first beggar that covets it.) Why, I caught two of their inflammatory treatises in this very house. By the same token I sent them to the executioner at Marseilles, with a request that he would burn them publicly, and charge me his usual fee for the extinction of vermin.'

"During this tirade Irène changed color, and seemed to glow with ire; but she merely said, or rather, ground out between her clenched teeth, 'Nothing will stop the march of free opinion in France.'

"'I am afraid not,' said her father. 'Still I have some little faith left in charges of cavalry and discharges of grape-shot.'

"'A fine argument!' said she, haughtily.

"I was so unlucky as to suggest that it was one the virtuous citizens who had just sacked the neighboring château would probably understand better than any other. The father laughed his approval, but the daughter turned on me with such a flash of furious resentment that I quailed under her eye: it glittered wickedly. Nothing more was said, but from that hour I learned that my glacier was inflammable.

"It was not long before I received another lesson of the same kind. I happened to remark one day that Mademoiselle Donon, the *gouvernante*, as I have called her, must have been a handsome woman in her day. 'Handsome?' said the marquis; 'there was not such a figure and such a face in the country-side; and the late marquise used to urge her to marry, and offered her a handsome dowry to wed one of her rustic admirers; and I offered to lick him into shape and employ him in the house; but poor Donon, accustomed to good society and French, could never bring her mind to marry a rustic and patter *patois*.'

"'What blind vanity!' said Irène. 'Those rustics are free men, and she is a menial. Such a husband would have elevated her in time to his own level.'

"'Ay,' said the marquis, 'this is the cant of the day. But learn, mademoiselle, that in such houses as ours a faithful domestic is not a menial, but a humble friend, respecting and respected. And Donon is an intelligent and educated woman; she would have really descended in the scale of humanity if she had allied herself to one of these uneducated peasants.'

"Mademoiselle de Groucy made no reply, but her

whole frame quivered, and she turned white with wrath. White! She was ghastly. I looked at her with surprise, and with a certain chill foreboding. I had seen red anger and black anger; but this white-hot ire, never; and all about what? Her theories contradicted somewhat roughly by her father; but theories which I concluded she could only have gathered from books; for she rarely went abroad except to mass, and never without her duenna. Looking at her pallid ire, and the white of her eye, which seemed to enlarge as she turned her head away from the marquis in her grim determination not to reply to him, I could not help saying to myself, 'I'm not her father, and husbands are apt to provoke their wives; this fair creature will perhaps kill me some day.' I felt all manner of vague alarms at a character so cold, so fiery, so profound, so unintelligible to me, and asked myself then and there whether it would not be wise to withdraw my claims to her.

"But I could not. Like the bird that flutters round the dazzling serpent, I was fascinated by the beautiful, dangerous creature, and neither able nor honestly willing to escape.

"Meantime the grand and simple character of my father-in-law won my heart, and I used now and then to go out shooting with him — for his company, not the sport. One day he shot a hare running by the edge of a precipice; she rolled over and lay in sight of us on a ledge of rock, but at a depth of eighty feet at least, and the descent almost perpendicular. The marquis ordered his dogs by name to go down and fetch up the hare. They ran eagerly to the edge to oblige him, and barked zealously, but did not like the commission. We were about to abandon our prey in despair, when suddenly there appeared on the scene a gigantic peasant, with a shock head of red hair so thick and stiff and high that

his cap seemed to be perched on a bundle of carrots. Close at his heels, with nose inserted between his calves, came a ragged lurcher. This personage looked over the edge of the ravine, saw our difficulty, grinned, and with perfect *sang-froid* proceeded to risk his life and his cur's for our hare. He made an oblique descent with the help of certain projections and shrubs, the dog sliding down at his heels, and on an emergency fixing his teeth in the man's loose trousers, till they reached a part where the descent was easier. Then the lurcher started on his own account, and with great dexterity scrambled down to the hare, and scrambled up with her in his mouth back to his master.

"But now came a very serious question: How were they to get back again? I felt really anxious, and said so; but the marquis said, 'Oh, don't be afraid; this fellow is the athlete of the district; wins all the prizes; they call him the champion. He will get out of it somehow.' The man hesitated a moment for all that; but he soon hit upon his plan. He took the hare up, and held her by the skin of her back with teeth the size of ivory chess-pawns; then he put his dog before him, and slowly, carefully, driving the points of his thick boots into every crevice, and grasping with iron strength every ledge or tuft that offered, he effected the perilous ascent. But it was no child's play. The perspiration trickled down his face, and he panted a little.

"I offered him a three-franc piece (none of them left now), but he declined it rather cavalierly, and busied himself with putting the hare into the marquis's game-bag. He was so generous as to add a little wooden figure he took out of his bosom. But this contribution was not observed by the marquis — only by me — and I was pleased, and still more amazed by this giant's simplicity.

"On our return we were met in the hall by Irène and her *gouvernante;* and the marquis, when he took the hare out of the game-bag, told her how it had been recovered for him by the champion and his dog.

"'What is the name of that colossus that wins all the prizes?'

"'Michel Flaubert,' said the young lady.

"'Ay, Flaubert, that's his name — a *vaurien* that wrestles, and dances, and poaches, and won't work. No matter; he saved my hare, he and his cur. I will buy that cur if he will sell him. What have we here?' And he drew out the little wooden figure. We all inspected the crude image. 'It is a sportsman,' said the marquis, 'leaning on his gun. He will blow his own head off some day.'

"Mademoiselle Donon opined it was a saint, and begged the marquis not to part with it; it would bring him good luck.

"'You are blind,' said Irène; 'it is a shepherd leaning on his staff.' And she put out her white hand, took the hideous statuette, and put it into her pocket. I said she did it great honor.

"'No,' said she, 'I only do it justice. You, who despise the simple art of a self-taught man, what can you do that you have not been taught?'

"'I can love, for one thing,' said I. And Mademoiselle de Groucy colored high at that, but tossed her head. 'And in the matter of art, if I cannot cut little dolls that resemble nothing in nature, I can paint a picture that shall resemble a creature whose loveliness none but the blind will dispute.'

"'Oh, indeed,' said she, satirically; 'and pray what creature is that?'

"'It is yourself.'

"'Me?'

"'Yes. Do me the honor to sit to me for your portrait, and I am quite content you shall compare my work with the sculpture of the illustrious Flaubert.'

"'A fair challenge!' cried the marquis, joyously. 'And I back the gentleman.'

"'Oh, of course,' said his daughter. 'But the day is gone by for despising our fellow-creatures.'

"'I despise no honest man,' said I. 'But so long as education and refined sentiments go with birth, you will be superior in my eyes to any peasant girl, and why not I to a peasant?'

"The marquis stopped me. 'Why waste your time in combating moonshine? My daughter knows these rustics only in landscapes and revolutionary pamphlets. Oh, I forget! she has seen them in church; but she never heard them, far less smelled them. Ye gods! when that Flaubert toiled up the precipice and brought me my hare, it was like a kennel of foxes.'

"At that Mademoiselle de Groucy left the room with queenly dignity. She was invincible. Her way of retiring put us both in the wrong, especially me, and I made a vow to connive at her theories in future. What did they matter, after all? But I had gained one great point this time — I was to paint her picture. I foresaw, as a lover, many advantages to be gained by that, and I lost no time in buying and preparing the canvas. The best-lighted room for the purpose proved to be Irène's boudoir; so I was introduced into that sanctum, and for some hours every day had all the delight of a painter in love. I directed her superb poses; I had the right to gaze at her and enjoy all her prismatic changes. She was reserved, and full of defence, but not childishly shy. She could not be always on her guard, so ever and anon came happy moments when she seemed conscious only of her youth and her beauty. Then a tender light glowed

through her limpid eyes, and she looked at me with that divine smile which my hand, inspired by love, has rendered better, perhaps, than a skilful artist would have done whose heart was not in the work. The picture advanced slowly, but surely. The marquis himself one day spared his partridges and sat with us. He was delighted, and said, 'This portrait is mine, since I give you the original;' and he ordered a magnificent frame for it directly.

"The portrait was finished at last, and my courtship proceeded with a certain smoothness, only I made no very perceptible advances. I never contradicted her republican theories; indeed, I was so subdued by her grand beauty I dared not thwart her in any way. Yet somehow I could not find out her heart; it evaded me. Often she seemed to be looking over my head at some greater person or grander character. I remember once in particular that I sat by her side on the veranda. After many attempts on my part the conversation died, and I was content to sit a little behind her, and watch her grace and beauty. She leaned her swan-like neck softly forward, her white brow just touched the flowering creepers, and she seemed in a soft reverie. I, too, contemplated her in quiet ecstasy. Suddenly she blushed and quivered, and her lovely bosom rose and fell tumultuously. I started up, and looked over to see who or what it was that moved her so. Instinct then told me I had a rival, and that he was in sight.

"I looked far and near. I could see no rival. It was the usual sleepy landscape; a few washerwomen at the fountain hard by, a few peasants dispersed over the background.

"For all that my mind misgave me, and at last I opened my heart to my friend the marquis. I told him I was discouraged and unhappy; his daughter's heart seemed above my reach.

"'Fiddle-de-dee!' said he. 'It all comes of this new system, — courting young ladies before marriage spoils them. They don't know all they gain by marriage, so they give themselves airs.'

"'Ay!' said I, 'but that is not all; I have watched her closely, and there is some one her heart beats for, though not for me.'

"'Nonsense!' said he; 'there is not a gentleman she would look at in the district. I know them all.'

"'But, monsieur,' said I, 'perhaps some prince of the blood has passed this way, or some great general or hero or patriot, and she has given him her heart; for she looks above me, and does not disguise it.'

"'She has seen no such personage,' was the reply. 'Ask Donon, who never leaves her.'

"'Then,' said I, 'it must be some imaginary character too lofty for poor me to compete with; for an idol she has.'

"'Humph!' said the marquis. 'That is possible.'

"'She reads pernicious books,' said I. 'I found her reading the "Nouvelle Héloïse," in her boudoir.'

"M. de Groucy lost his composure directly. 'The "Nouvelle Héloïse,"' said he; 'and did you not fling it out of the window?'

"I confessed I dared not. I dared do nothing to offend her.

"The marquis bestowed a look of pity on me, and left the room all in a hurry, and I awaited his return in no little anxiety. He came back in about half an hour, which he must have spent in ransacking his daughter's library. He reappeared with the 'Nouvelle Héloïse;' a philosophic history, by I forget whom; a discourse on superstition (vulgarly called religion), by D'Alembert; and one or two works tending to remove the false distinction civilization had invented between *meum* and

tuum and the classes of society. The marquis showed me the books, and then invited me to follow him. He went first to the kitchen, and made the cook brand these *chefs-d'œuvre* of modern sentiment with a red-hot iron; then he had them carefully packed in a box, and sent to the executioner at Marseilles for public conflagration.

"Having thus eased his mind, he reviewed the situation more calmly. 'My son,' said he, 'you have tried your new-fangled system, with the result that might have been expected. You approach the girl cap in hand, and she gives herself airs accordingly; now we will try ancestral wisdom. Next Sunday I shall publish your banns in the church, and this day week (Wednesday) you will marry her; and on Thursday you will find her obliging; on Friday, affectionate; on Saturday, cajoling. Saturday *afternoon* she will probably make the usual attempt to be master — they all do. You will put that down with a high hand, and from that hour she will respect and love you with all the loyalty of her race.'

"His confidence inspired me. His affection and partisanship affected me deeply. I threw myself into his arms, and I remember I said, 'If she would only love me as much as I love you' — And then my tongue faltered.

"The marquis patted me tenderly on the head with his huge hand, — he was a man of great stature, — and said, 'She shall adore you. Leave that to me.'

"I am bound to admit that so much of the programme as depended on him was carried out to the letter. The very next Sunday we all went to mass in state; and after the service the priest read out from the altar with a loud voice: —

"'Are betrothed this day, the high and excellent Seigneur Grégoire, Viscount of Pontarlais, and the high and excellent damsel Irène de Groucy,' etc. There was

an angry murmur from the crowd; they objected to our titles. The marquis shrugged his shoulders with unutterable scorn at that, and said, aloud, 'Monsieur le Vicomte, do me the honor to give your hand to your bride, and pass out before the rest of us.'

"I came forward with a beating heart. Mademoiselle de Groucy was pale, and trembled a little — she was evidently taken by surprise; but she put her hand in mine without a moment's hesitation, and we marched down the aisle, and through the western door. But once outside the place the people flocked round us, and there were some satirical murmurs, at which the marquis changed color, and his eyes flashed contemptuous ire, but presently a band of about twelve broke through the mass, headed by that very peasant who had rescued our hare for us; and he came, cap in hand, and begged the marquis to preside at the wrestling and shooting for prizes which were to take place that afternoon.

"I think, had it been any other applicant, the offended gentleman would have refused; but he remembered his hare, and the fellow's good services, and gave a cold consent. Then we turned to go home, but the crowd once more embarrassed us, and it was not a friendly crowd. My blood got up, and, taking my betrothed under my arm, I prepared to force a passage; but she slipped from me like an eel, and said, imperiously, 'Flaubert, clear the way.' The giant, on this order, stepped in front of us, and shoved the other peasants out of the way, right and left, as if they had been so much dirt. As soon as we were clear, he turned on his heel with as utter a contempt for those who were not his *equals* in brute strength as ever a French noble showed for those who were not his equals in birth and breeding.

"We walked home, mademoiselle in front, haughtily, as one whom no such trifles could disturb, but the mar-

quis sombre and agitated. He put his hand on my shoulder, and said, 'We have almost been insulted. This will end in bloodshed. I shall prepare the defence of my castle. You said a good thing the other day; grape-shot is an argument the *canaille* can understand. Meantime, we honor that village with no more visits. Your wedding will be celebrated in my private chapel.'

"I looked anxiously to see how my betrothed received this. She said nothing, but somehow her whole body seemed to hear it. After breakfast I entered her boudoir, and found her trimming a scarf of many colors with gold lace. It was in the worst possible taste, but I dared not say so. I asked, with feigned admiration, whom it was to adorn.

"'You, if you can earn it,' said she, dryly. 'It is for the victor in the sports: the swiftest runner, the strongest wrestler. You have only to eclipse these despised peasants in such manly exercises, and I shall have the honor of placing it on your shoulders.'

"I saw she was bent on mortifying me, and perhaps drawing me into a quarrel, so I remembered Wednesday was near, and said, as pleasantly as I could, 'Do not think I share your father's violent prejudices. I desire to be just to all men. There is much to admire in the hardy, honest sons of toil. But neither are the gentry fit subjects of wholesale contempt. The peasant who carves a figure which one critic takes for a shepherd, another for a sportsman, and another for a saint, could not paint your picture to save his life, and a polite duel with glittering rapiers demands more true manhood than a wrestling bout.'

"My words, I knew, would not please her, so I made the tone so humble and conciliatory that she vouchsafed no reply.

"Then I sat down beside her, and asked her to forgive

me if I esteemed a little too highly that class she belonged to and adorned. None the less should her *opinions* always be respected by me. Then I added, 'Why should we waste our time on such subjects? For my part, I am too happy to dispute. Oh, if I was only more worthy of you! and if I but knew how to make you love me a little, now that you have accepted me publicly as your betrothed' —

"'Say "*my espouser*,"' said she, calmly. Then I remembered that in Rousseau's volume of poison, that pedantic, sensual hussy applies this term to the two suitors she despises. I was stung with the scorpion jealousy, and my old suspicion revived and maddened me. 'Ah!' said I, haughtily, 'and who is the St. Preux for whom you mortify me so cruelly? If he is worthy of you, how comes it he is afraid to show his face?'

"'Be assured,' said she, with sullen dignity, 'I shall never marry any one of whom I am ashamed.'

"'Of that I am sure,' said I; 'and if ever St. Preux appears, and comes between my betrothed and me, it will be an honor to me to cross steel with him, and a greater still to kill him, which I shall do as sure as heaven is above us.' At that time I was an accomplished swordsman.

"'Oh,' said she, 'then you would marry me against my will?'

"'No,' said I, staggered by so direct a blow; 'but I would not go back from my troth plighted at the altar; would you? The conversation is taking such a turn that I think Monsieur the Marquis de Groucy is entitled to share in it.'

"She turned pale, but recovered herself in a moment. 'That is unnecessary,' said she. 'I am sorry if I have offended you.' She drooped her head with infinite grace, and when she raised it she smiled on me and said, 'I am

flattered by your affection. You have the prejudices of your class but not their vices. Let us be friends.' She held out her white hand. I fell on my knees and kissed it devotedly.

"'Oh, how I adore you!' I sighed; and my eyes filled with tenderness. Even hers seemed to dwell on me with a gentler expression than I had ever seen before in them.

"But just as I was making friends with her so sweetly, came a cruel interruption."

These words were scarcely out of the narrator's mouth when what I thought a cruel interruption occurred. The curé came in, dripping. My hospitable uncle had his outer garment removed, and a pint of old Burgundy spiced and heated, and in his warm hospitality would have resigned the story altogether.

But that was intolerable to me. As soon as I could with decency I said, timidly, "*Monsieur le curé* loves a good story as well as anybody."

"That I do," said the curé, with such zeal that I could have hugged him. And in short, after a few polite speeches, and a reminder from me as to where he had left off, Monsieur de Pontarlais resumed; and it struck me at the time that he was not sorry to have one more intelligent and attentive auditor, for indeed the good curé seemed to drink in every word.

"Well, gentlemen, my courtship was interrupted by a summons to visit the sports. As to the running and the shooting, I remember only that it was nothing to boast of, and that the prize for the latter was won by that red-headed giant, and that he came to the marquis, cap in hand, and received a pewter mug.

"Then came the wrestling. Two rustics, naked to the waist, struggled together with more strength than skill. One was thrown, and retired crestfallen. Another came on, and threw the victor. Each bout occupied a long

time. The sun began to sink, and your humble servant to yawn.

"My betrothed was all eyes and enthusiasm, though the sight was more monotonous than delicate; but the marquis pitied me, and said, '*You* are not bound to endure all this. The result is known beforehand. After two dozen encounters a victor will be declared, and then "the champion" will throw *him* with considerable ease; the champion is that red-headed giant, Flaubert. He will come forward, and go down on one knee, and my daughter will bestow this scarf on him. Brought your smelling-bottle, child, I hope? Then, on other occasions, I used to feast them all; but after their insolence at the church-door — insolence to you, *monsieur mon gendre* — I shall admit only the champion Flaubert and his guard of honor, twelve in number. Pierre has his orders; if the rest try to force their way, he will let the portcullis down on their heads. They have all been told that, *and why.*'

"Well, I did not care to see my betrothed put that scarf upon the champion, so I strolled away, and wandered about the château. An irresistible curiosity led me to that part of the building in which Mademoiselle de Groucy slept. Her bedroom was in a large tower looking down upon the parterre, which was, like the hanging gardens of Babylon, full thirty feet above the plain the castle stood on; for indeed it was a castle rather than a château. I entered her bedroom with a tremor of curiosity and delight; it was large and lofty; the bed had no curtains, and was covered with a snowy sheet — nothing more. Spartan simplicity was seen in every detail. The picture, framed as you see it now, rested on two huge chairs; and at this my heart beat. On a table by the side of the looking-glass I discovered the quaint little figure Flaubert had bestowed upon the

marquis along with the famous hare. 'Well,' thought I, looking at that monstrosity and at my picture, 'that is a comparison she is welcome to make.' I was ashamed of my curiosity, and soon retired. I went and sat in her boudoir. Her work was about; there were many signs of her presence; a delicate perfume mingled with the scents of the flowers. I sat at the open window. Voices murmured in the château, but outside all was still. Soft dreams of coming happiness possessed me; I leaned my head out of window and drank the evening air, and thought of Wednesday, and the life of bliss to follow. I was calm, and for the first time ineffably happy.

"The sun set; the castle was still; no doubt even the limited number of visitors admitted by the marquis had retired; still I remained there in a delicious reverie. Presently, in the darkness, I thought I saw a figure pass along close to the wall, and stop at the tower a little while. Then it suddenly disappeared, so that it was most likely a shadow. Shadow, or not, I was going to be jealous again, when my betrothed entered the room gayly and invited me to supper.

"'You must not abandon us altogether,' said she, and she beamed so, and her manner was so kind and caressing, that I was in the seventh heaven directly. She gave me her hand of her own accord, and I conducted her to the *salle à manger*.

"'Oh, you have found him, have you?' said the marquis gayly. 'That is lucky, for I have the appetite of a wolf.'

"A noble repast was served in honor of our betrothal, and we did honor to it. I forget what was said, but I remember that for the first time Irène allowed her gifts to appear. What animation! what grace! what sparkling wit without ill-nature! what inimitable powers of pleasing, coupled for once with the desire to please! Oh, marvellous inconsistency of woman!

"Her father was fascinated as well as I, and embraced her warmly when she retired, with a sweet, submissive apology to me, saying that the day, though delightful, had been a little fatiguing.

"Her father and I remained, and, instead of our invariable piquet, were well content to sing her praises and congratulate ourselves.

"The subject was inexhaustible, and I am sure we had sat together more than an hour when a great murmur of voices was heard, and Mademoiselle Donon came in with a terrified air to say that there was a tumult outside.

"'More likely a serenade on this festive occasion,' suggested the marquis. But at that moment the great bell of the church began to peal. It was the tocsin.

"'Are we on fire,' cried the marquis, 'and don't know it?'

"I ran to the window, threw it open, and looked out. I saw flaming torches moving towards the castle from various parts, and heard angry murmurs.

"'Sir,' said I in no little agitation, 'they are going to attack us, as they did that other château.'

"De Groucy smiled grimly. 'All the worse for them if they do. I had the drawbridge raised at dusk, and we have plenty of ammunition.'

"Here a servant came in with a face of news.

"'What is the matter?' asked the marquis.

"'They have not the sense to say,' replied the man. He was the master of the hounds. 'I hailed them through the grating, and asked them to declare their grievance. But the fools kept roaring, "The champion! the champion!" and not another word could I get out of them. Do they think we have taken the blackguard prisoner?'

"'Stuff!' said the marquis; 'that is a blind. Load all the muskets with ounce bullets this instant.'

"The man retired to execute this order.

"'But, sir,' said I, 'may not the champion have been shut in when you raised the drawbridge? I thought I saw a figure on the parterre, groping his way about in the dark.'

"'No, no,' said the marquis. 'If any one had been shut in by accident, he would have come to the postern, and the janitor would have let him out. Any stick to beat a dog! any excuse to insult or pillage their betters! that is the France we live in now. So be it. Not one of the *canaille* shall enter the place alive.'

"'I am at your orders,' said I catching fire.

"All these, you must understand, were hurried words, spoken as we marched, the marquis leading the way up the great staircase. At the head of it Pierre and Guillaume met him with the loaded muskets and ammunition, and he then said to me, —

"'You wonder, perhaps, to see me so calm, with women under my charge and wild beasts howling outside. But I am a soldier and know what I am about. This castle is simply impregnable to foes of that kind except at one spot, the small postern, and that is bound with iron. Should they batter it down, the aperture is small: we three can kill them all, one at a time, and at daybreak I will hand the survivors over to Captain Beaumont, who will be here with a squadron of mounted carbineers. The worst of it is, vicomte, I must disturb your betrothed, for it is only from her window we can fire upon the postern.'

"He led the way to his daughter's room, and we naturally drew back. In the passage adjoining, a cold wind blew on us, and a small but massive door, with gigantic bolts, was found to be ajar.

"The marquis turned round on us astonished, and for the first time showed anxiety. He said, in a low, unsteady voice, —

"'Who has opened this passage?'

"'Does it lead to the parterre?' said I, and began to fear some strange mystery.

"'It did,' said he, 'but I condemned it ten years ago.'

"'Full that, sir,' said Pierre; 'twas I nailed it up, by your orders. I wish I knew the traitor who has taken out the nails and drawn the bolts back.'

"The marquis's cheek was pale, and his eyes flashed. 'To the portcullis, Pierre and Guillaume,' said he; 'and if any stranger comes to it from the house, kill him without a word. You and I, son-in-law, can defend the postern.'

"Our forces thus separated, he went on to his daughter's room, and knocked gently: there was no reply. He knocked louder; there was no reply.

"'She is asleep,' said he; 'I will go in and prepare her.'

"Then I drew back out of delicacy.

"He took out a pass-key and opened the door.

"There was a man in his daughter's room.

"That man was 'the champion.'

"'The champion' stood motionless, and looked quite stupefied.

"Mademoiselle de Groucy, quick as he was slow, darted before him with extended arms to protect him, but the next moment cried, 'Fly, fly for your life!' The moment she made way for him to fly, the marquis levelled his musket, and fired at his head with as little hesitation as he would at a wild boar.

"What I took to be the champion's brains flew horribly before the discharge: the air was all smoke; a heavy body rushed between the marquis and me and drove us apart; and the door of the condemned passage was slammed. M. de Groucy strode into the room: I

followed him. The smoke began to clear, and all things were visible as in a mist; patches of hair floated about, mowed by the bullet off the champion's skull.

"Irène leaned against the mantel-piece, white as a ghost; but only her body crouched, and that not much; her haughty head was erect, and her eyes faced us, shining supernaturally. The marquis, stout as he was, sank into a chair and trembled.

"'How did that man get in here?' said he hoarsely.

"'I let him in by the condemned door,' said she, pale but unflinching. 'Cannot you see that I love him?'

"'You love that *canaille?*' groaned the marquis.

"'I love that young man because he is a man, and has all the virtues that belong to his humble condition. He earns his bread, and I shall be proud to earn mine with him. But it is you and this gentleman who have hastened things; you were forcing me and hurrying me into a marriage without love. No misery, no degradation, can equal that. That is why I called him to my aid. I placed myself under his protection.'

"'I will kill him,' said the marquis to me with deadly calmness.

"She came forward directly, and folded her arms before him. 'Then you will kill my honor, for he is my lover: I belong to him.'

"At that audacious avowal the marquis rose like a tower, and lifted his hand to fell her to the earth; but he did not strike her. Better for her, perhaps, if he had, for words can be more terrible than blows.

"'Since you can fall no lower,' said he, 'marry your peasant, and live on his dunghill with him. You are no child of mine. I banish you, and I disown you, and may God's curse light on you and him forever!'

"Then for the first time her proud head drooped upon

her hand, and that hand upon the mantel-piece. 'You will forgive me one day,' she murmured faintly.

"'Forgive you!' said he with unutterable scorn; 'I shall forget you. You are no more to me now than the dirt I walk on. Come, my son, my only child.' He took my hand and drew me away. He never looked back, but I cast one long, miserable glance on her whom it was my misery to love and hate. Her white wrist rested on a high chair, her head was bowed, yet her fearless eyes did not turn from us. She was beautiful as she stood there half cowed by a father's curse; as beautiful as she had been in her scorn, in her ire, and in her happy reveries, when her lips parted with that happy smile, and a tender fire glowed in her dewy eyes."

While the narrator paused, and we sat silent, looking at the picture, Suzon came hurriedly in, with tears in her eyes, and told the curé Catherine was very ill indeed, and begging to see him. He rose directly and accompanied her.

"You had better sleep here," said my uncle; "your bed is always ready, you know."

"With pleasure," said he.

As soon as the door had closed on him, I remarked, rather peevishly, that I never knew an interesting story allowed to proceed without a whole system of interruption.

The elders smiled at my impatience. M. de Pontarlais suggested that perhaps I felt those interruptions more than others. My uncle said, "We must take good men as they are, and thank God for them. I have known him fourteen years, yet never once to neglect a sick person for any personal gratification whatever."

Then I remember I was half ashamed of myself, and said I venerated the good curé and loved him dearly, and if he would stay with Catherine, well and good;

but he would be coming back in a few minutes, and it was this perpetual *va-et-vient* that was breaking my heart and the thread of the only beautiful story I had ever heard told by word of mouth.

"Calm yourself, my young friend," said Monsieur de Pontarlais: "my story is nearly ended.

"The marquis compelled me to leave him, after awhile, and seek repose. I could not find it; I raged with fury; I sickened with despair; I loved and I hated. This is the world's hell.

"The first thing next morning Mademoiselle Donon came to the marquis and me in tears, and told us she had heard all, but implored us not to believe one word against Irène's honor. She could only, until that fatal night, have spoken to the man at the village fêtes, or from the balcony of the parterre, forty feet above the ground. 'Poor, inexperienced girl,' said she, 'how should she measure her words? She did not know what she was saying.'

"'The pupils of Rousseau have not much to learn,' was the grim reply.

"The next minute Pierre came in and told us mademoiselle had left the house with a bundle in her hand, and dressed like a peasant girl. I started up, but the marquis laid a hand of iron on me. 'Let her go,' said he, — 'let her taint a peasant's home; she shall not dishonor mine. Her own mother should not keep her if she were alive and went on her knees to me.'

"This was the end. I stayed that miserable day, and then the marquis sent me home. I told him I should tell my father our tempers were irreconcilable — his daughter's and mine.

"'What! tell a lie about her?' said the iron noble. 'Tell the truth, my son, and retain *my* love.'

"Well, that difficulty was solved for me. I reached

home in a high fever, and it soon settled on my brain, and I was insensible for weeks.

"I recovered slowly, and it was many months ere I could walk. Ah, fatal beauty! you nearly killed two men: the blackguard you adored with all those queenly airs of yours — a bullet grazed his skull and ploughed his hair to the roots; and all through you the gentleman you despised lay at death's door many a day."

Our friend the curé came in as these words were spoken. He looked very grave, and said that he must stay the night. Catherine was, he feared, a dying woman. She was asleep just now, but a sleep of utter exhaustion.

My uncle was much concerned. He got up directly to go and see his faithful servant, and the story was interrupted again, as I had foreseen, and the conversation turned on poor Catherine and her humble virtues till my uncle returned, looking very glum. Then Suzon came in, bearing a huge silver bowl, and this was speedily filled with wine, sugar, lemon, and spices — a delicious and fragrant compound.

It was ladled out into our glasses, and under its influence I took courage and implored the count to finish the story. He consented at once, but said it would have little interest for me now, since the principal figure had disappeared.

"I lay a long time between life and death, and even when I was out of danger my mind was confused and troubled. However, by degrees I recovered a certain dogged calm of mind, and indeed since then I have observed in other victims of the tender passion that a brain-fever from disappointed love either kills the body or cures the heart.

"My long and dangerous illness was followed by a period of bodily weakness, during which those about me

seemed leagued together to know nothing about the family of De Groucy. No doubt they had their orders.

"At last, one day, being now stronger, I asked my father, with feigned composure, if he still corresponded with my dear friend the Marquis de Groucy.

"'Yes, my son,' was his reply. 'He is in England. He has sold his property and emigrated. He came here on his way and wept over you, but you did not know him.' This made my tears flow. After awhile I said, 'Father, she whom I loved so dearly — O father, I can bear anything now! tell me. Her own parent has abandoned her, but perhaps she has come to her senses, and only needs a friend to save her from that wretch.'

"'Grégoire,' said my father firmly, 'be a man; forget that woman. She is not worth a thought. She has chosen her dunghill, let her lie on it.' Then, as I persisted in begging him to tell me something about her, he said, 'I will tell you this much: you have no betrothed, my poor friend has no daughter, and his noble race is extinct.'

"After that I maintained a sort of sad and gloomy silence, and all those who really loved me flattered themselves I had forgotten her; but now, after so many years, I own to you, Monsieur Frédéric, that her beauty and her voice, and the love I had given her, haunted me, and were an obstacle to marriage, until celibacy became too fixed a habit. Even now, in the decline of life, my old heart thrilled at the sudden sight of her shadow there — the life-like image of one I loved too well."

This set us all gazing at the portrait, and the curé in particular got up and examined it very closely, and with a puzzled air.

But I still thirsted for more. "Surely," said I, "in the course of all these years you must have heard something more about her."

"Not a word."

"Made some inquiries?"

"None."

"At least, sir, you know whether she is alive or dead?"

"No, I do not."

Then I began to bemoan my ill-fortune. "O sir," said I, "when you began your beautiful story I felt sure I should hear all about her, and where she is now; but you lost sight of her when she was no older than I am, and there you drop the curtain, and all is dark. It is all over now; nobody will ever tell me the story of her life; nobody knows anything about her."

"You are mistaken," said the curé gravely. "I know a great deal about her."

"Is it possible?" I cried, wild with excitement. "Oh, how fortunate! Ah, my dear friend, tell us all you know."

"Not so, Monsieur Frédéric. I must not tell you what I know as her confessor and director, but I will tell you all that I have a right to tell. Alas! it is a short but terrible history.

"Well, then, for many years before I came here I had a cure on the other side of the mountains, and among my parishioners was a family of farmers called Flaubert. The head of it was a widow woman, who farmed a little freehold with great ability and keenness, and kept the house with strict economy. She had two sons and their wives under her roof.

"The elder took after her, was prudent, laborious, and married a young woman who had a piece of land and a bit of money, and was also a managing woman. She had two children, and no more. The other son was a young man spoiled early in life by his physical gifts. He was of colossal size, yet could run like a deer and

dance like a fawn; a first-rate shot, a poacher, and the champion wrestler of the district. Indeed, he was called the 'champion' even in his own family, and they were proud of him three or four times a year, when he brought home prizes from the fairs; the rest of the time they blushed for him. This young man's wife was a person you could not fail to remark. Her figure was stately and erect; her carriage graceful. As to her face, it had not the bloom of youth and beauty which illumines that lovely picture. Seven years of peasant life and the hot sun of Provence had tanned her neck and arms, and a discontented mind, which never looked to religion for comfort, had embittered her very face. I remember that even then a deep line crossed her forehead, and her cheeks were hollow, compared with that plump beauty, and her throat was not a smooth column like that. But now I think of it, her hands, though brown with exposure, were shapely, and not like a peasant's, and her eyes and eyebrows were really superb, and her forehead and face were white and smooth as ivory. Yes, I can just believe that this picture was like her in the flower of her youth. Only, as I said before, when I first saw her she was hardened by labor, bronzed by the sun, withered, as I now learn, by a father's curse, and soured by infidelity.

"The Flaubert family lived a quarter of a league from the village, and I saw the wife of Michel about, more than once, before I spoke to her. Her appearance and carriage were so striking that I made inquiries about her of the villagers with whom I had already made acquaintance.

"'Oh, the fair peasant!' said one. 'The countess!' said another, in coarse derision of her superior; and they told me she was the daughter of a red-hot aristo, who had fled to England because she married a peasant for

love. They gave me plenty of details, and you would smile if you heard the vulgar romances each narrator constructed on her true story, which, nevertheless, was romantic enough.

"The widow and her eldest daughter attended mass, and I conversed with them. In due course I asked the widow if she had not another daughter-in-law.

"The two women looked at each other and shrugged their shoulders. 'Yes, I have, sir,' said the widow, 'to my misfortune.'

"'Shall I not see her at mass?'

"'Let us hope not; for she would only come to yawn or to mock. She is a pagan, I believe, among her other qualities.'

"'Perhaps she attends to the home while you are out?'

"'She attend to the home!' and both women laughed heartily at the idea — so heartily that the younger thought it necessary to make an apology. The elder chimed in and said, in the sly way of a Provençal peasant, "If her outside has interested Monsieur le Curé, I can give him a picture of her at this moment. She is sitting over my fire, burning her petticoat, with her hands lolling by her sides, making useless embroidery, or else in a pure reverie. As for her household occupation, she is either letting the pot boil over or get cold. I could not swear which; but 'tis one or t'other.'

"Of course I checked these remarks, and lectured upon Christian charity. My discourse was received with respectful silence, but my hearers seemed turned into wood.

"Some days after this I was caught in a heavy rain, and the nearest shelter was the farmhouse of the Flauberts. I knocked at the door, no notice was taken; I knocked again; a light footstep, and the door was opened

by Madame Michel. She did not receive me hospitably. She said, in broad Provençal, 'There is nobody in the house,' and she held the door in her hand. Then I tried her in French. 'Madame,' said I, 'I am wet through, and if I could, without incommoding you' —

"'Do me the honor to come in,' said she, with perfect accent and the most graceful courtesy. She seated me by the fire, and we entered into conversation. I believe we conversed about trifles, and I could not help admiring her grace and courtesy, and the French language, the language of politeness, which had at once recalled her to her native good-breeding. She spoke it exquisitely, notwithstanding the little use she now made of it.

"I forget all our small-talk; but I remember at last that she fixed her eyes full upon mine and said, 'Monsieur, why did you speak to me in French?'

"I answered her honestly, and with some emotion: 'Because, madame, I know your story from others (her pale cheek colored at that), and, to be quite frank, I came here hoping, by my advice and authority, to make matters smoother and more pleasant in this house.'

"'You would but waste your time,' said she. 'These people hate me with all their hearts, and I despise them with all my soul. Matters are come to such a pitch that we endure each other only because we are about to part. My husband is heir to a small sum of money, and he has purchased a cottage and a few acres that are sold very cheap, belonging to an *émigré*. We shall do very well when we are alone.'

"'You have my best wishes,' said I; 'but I am afraid you are too little accustomed to the hard life of a working farmer; and even your husband has never learned to dig and mow and labor like his brother; his tastes appear to be for pastimes and games and' —

"'You need not mince the matter,' said she; 'he is

lazy and, worse still, he is fond of drinking and gambling. But it is all his mother's fault, with her weak indulgence; and now she encourages him to desert his home out of her jealousy of me. Once I get him away from this vile woman, he will stay beside me and lead an honest, industrious life, as I shall for his sake.'

"I knew Michel was hardened in his ill habits, and that love could not convert him without religion. I thought it my duty to tell her so. The woman froze directly, and when I urged my views she encountered me with all the cold infidelity and satire of this unhappy age. She was armed at all points by Messieurs Volney, D'Alembert, Voltaire, and others, and by her own self-confidence. So I told her I would not argue with her but pray for her.

"'Do you believe prayers are heard?' said she, ironically.

"I told her I thought earnest prayers were always heard, and sometimes granted.

"'Well,' said she, 'the most earnest prayer I ever heard was when my own father cursed me and my husband. Will God grant that?'

"'Not against your souls,' said I.

"She shrugged her shoulders, as much as to say the exception was of very little value; and I left the house defeated and sad."

"And I answer for it you kept your word and prayed for this perverse creature," said my uncle.

"With all my heart and soul," replied the good curé.

He continued: —

"The next time I saw her was one evening; the whole family were there, except Michel. They all received me in a friendly manner, and gave me the place of honor at a long table, about which they were all seated, picking the shoots out of some damaged wheat for their own use.

"The eldest son entertained me with a voluble discourse about the markets, the price of grain; and all the time Michel's wife sat with her feet at the fire, and her arms folded, and her head against the wall in an attitude of sleepy disdain.

"But presently there was a whistle heard in the yard, and she started up, all animation.

"'There he is!' she cried, and darted out of the door. She soon returned with 'the champion,' who greeted us all, in a loud, jovial voice, with blunt civility.

"'Daughter-in-law,' said her mother, 'serve your husband.'

"Then she cut an enormous slice of bread and ladled a large basinful of soup out of the great pot. Unfortunately, the pot had been taken off the fire to put on more wood, and the soup was lukewarm. The champion made a grimace.

"'Cold weather outside and cold soup within,' said he. This was not said harshly, but his mother fired up directly.

"'Saints in paradise!' she cried, turning towards her obnoxious daughter-in-law. 'Is it possible that a woman can reach your years and not learn to keep her man's soup hot against he comes home wet and hungry?'

"The young woman just turned two haughty eyes upon her, and said, 'It's nobody's business if Michel does not complain.' Then I, to make peace, said I feared that I was the person in fault, for I had moved the pot a little to warm my feet.

"The champion — a good-humored fellow at bottom — stopped me, and said, 'Don't let's make a mountain of a mole-hill. The soup's very good, if it is a little cold, and it's going to a warm place any way;' and with this he shovelled it rapidly down his throat. 'The worst of it is,' said he, 'that my feet are wet through with the

snow and the slush;' and he took off a pair of enormous shoes, and threw them roughly towards his wife and said, 'There, wife, put all that right for me.'

"The daughter of the Marquis de Groucy took her peasant lord's shoes, bowed her head meekly over them, scraped the clay from them with a piece of stick, then wiped them with a damp cloth, then put some hot cinders inside, shook them out again, and brought the shoes to her master. He received them without a word of thanks. This gave me some pain, and I soon after took my leave. Michel's wife, remembering, I suppose, the habits of her youth, accompanied me to the end of the court that lay before the door. I took this opportunity of saying that since she had learned to humble herself before a man, and do the duty of a wife so meekly, I felt sure she would some day learn to humble herself before God, who abaseth the proud and lifteth up the lowly.

"What think you was the answer I received from this keen spirit, nursed upon the wit of Messieurs Volney, D'Alembert, and Voltaire?

"'Monsieur,' said she, 'there are curés who can only talk religion; there are some who can also talk reason; you are one of the happy few who can talk reason if you choose, for you have been a man of the world. If it is all the same to you, pray, when you do me the honor to converse with me, don't talk religion, talk sense.'

"'I consent, madame,' said I, sorrowfully; 'but you must permit me to pray for you.'

"About a fortnight after this I met the champion. He was going to a neighboring fair, dressed in his Sunday clothes. I asked him if he was going to compete for the prize for wrestling, as usual. He said, 'No; this time it's more serious. My mother has at last paid me the eight hundred francs she has long promised me, and I

am going to buy a cottage and a bit of emigrant's land — house and farm. There my wife and I shall keep house alone. The truth is, *Monsieur le curé*,' said he, 'that the women can't agree at home; my mother despises my wife, and my wife hates my mother. We shall do better apart.'

"I had my doubts on that point, and thought both husband and wife equally unfitted for the labor and self-denial that lay before them; but I kept that to myself, and all I did was to warn this confident young man against the temptations of the fair.

"'Have no fear,' said he; and went away full of buoyant confidence.

"That very evening he called at my house, pale and agitated, and told me a different tale. He had been induced to gamble for a small sum, in order, he said, to buy his wife a gold chain; he had lost it, and his wild endeavors to recover it by the same unlikely means had thrown away his little fortune. One virtue the poor fellow had — filial reverence. He told me with tears in his eyes of all his mother's goodness and self-denial, and he said that he couldn't face her and tell her he had wasted in a day what had cost her four years to save. He spoke of leaving the country, and begged me to carry her his penitence and shame. I said, 'My son, I'll do better; I will take you to her, and show you the depth of a mother's love.'

"Well, at last I prevailed on him to come with me to the house, but he couldn't be induced to come in until I had made his confession for him. As I expected, the mother said, 'Poor, foolish boy! Just tell him to come in to his supper; his mother's arms shall not be closed to him.' So I brought him in. The others received him in grim silence, but the old woman merely said, 'Why, Michel, it's a pity you had not more sense; but 'tis your

own money you have lost, and no one else has a right to complain. This house is always open to you.' Then, finding his wife dead silent and terribly pale, he went to her to make his peace with her; but she started back from him, and said, 'Don't you come near me, you vile prodigal and madman. You've condemned me to live all my life with these people, who hate me, and I hate them with all my heart.' As an outrageous quarrel was clearly impending, I withdrew; but something — I know not what — induced me to wait at a little distance, and pray for the peace of this ill-assorted couple. Alas! I had better have stayed; for, as I learned from the others, that angry wife reproached him and taunted him in her fury, till he actually raised his huge hand and struck her on the face.

"She was stunned at first, I heard, but soon uttered a wild cry of anguish and frenzy; and catching up, with a woman's strange intent, some embroidery she had been working upon, she turned round and cursed them all.

"'Rot on your dunghill, all of you!' she cried, and tore open the door and dashed out.

"Then the old woman cried, 'Mind, Michel, she will disgrace you!' and he dashed after her.

"Unluckily, she stumbled over something in the yard, and I saw the swift-footed champion overtake her, and seize her, and drag her back toward the house. She screamed, she struggled, in vain; but at last, by a furious effort, she half freed herself for a moment, and I saw her lift her hand high, and then strike the man on the breast. At this moment I was coming forward to interfere.

"To my surprise the giant uttered a cry of dismay, and staggered away from her, and burst headlong into the house. To be sure, the blow was furious, but it was only a woman's hand that struck, and I saw no weapon

in that hand. As for her, she rushed the other way, and I think would have passed me without notice, but that I uttered an ejaculation of pity and concern; then she stopped and glared at me; and I must tell you that I then noticed something which Monsieur de Pontarlais has already drawn attention to — the whites of her eyes showed themselves to me in the moonlight with a strange and, I may say, a terrible expression — the expression of some infuriated wild animal. 'He struck me!' she cried. 'He struck me! the woman who gave up all for him, and braved a father's curse. My curse and my father's be on *him* and all his brood!' With that she darted past me and disappeared.

"After a moment's hesitation I felt it my duty to enter the house, and make some sort of endeavor, however hopeless, to repair the mischief; indeed, I was prepared to use all the authority my office gave me, and take part with great severity against this ruffian, and all the rest who, by their animosity, had paved the way for this abominable outrage.

"Well, I went in at the open door; I found the champion leaning with his back against the wall, rolling his eyes as if in pain, and groaning loudly. The situation seemed to amuse his brother; at least, that person was jeering him for not being able to bring his wife back by force. 'You'll win no more prizes for wrestling at the fair.'

"'No,' said the colossus; 'I'm done for;' and with that, still groaning, he seemed to sink half down by the wall, and his hands grasped wildly at his breast.

"Then I looked, and saw something that began to give me a terrible misgiving. Being in his gala dress, he had on a white shirt, and in the middle of his ample bosom was something that had first looked like a very large stud or breastpin made of mother-of-pearl.

"Round this thing was a thin circle of red, fine as a hair; and this red circle I saw enlarging. My experience in the army told me how serious this was, and I cried, 'Silence! the man is stabbed, and is bleeding internally.' As these words left my lips, the poor champion sunk to the ground, and gasped out once more, '*Je suis un homme perdu.*' In a moment they were all around him, and after a few hurried words, with his mother's consent, I took on me to draw the weapon out from the wound. It was an instrument ladies used in that day for embroidery. I think they opened a passage for the needle with it. The whole instrument was not four inches long, and the steel portion of it scarcely three inches; but a woman's hand had driven it home so keenly that even a portion of the handle had entered the wound. When I withdrew this insignificant but fatal weapon, the champion gave a sigh of relief. He then ceased to bleed inwardly, but immediately the blood spurted and poured out of him through that small aperture. All attempts to stanch it were vain, and, indeed, were useless, for his fate was to bleed to death either inwardly with pain, or outwardly without pain. I told them all that very gravely, and as tenderly as I could. Then the poor wretches burst out into imprecations on the woman that had brought him to that. Then I put on for the first time the authority of the Church. I took out my crucifix, and I ordered them all, even the mother who bore him, from the room. That grand body, so full of blood, of strength, and youth, resisted long the fatal drain, and God gave me time to do His work. The dying man confessed his sins; he owned the justice of this fatal blow, since he had raised his hand against the weak creature he had vowed to protect and cherish; he blessed his mother and his brother, and forgave his wife. Then I gave him absolution with all my heart and conscience, and he died in peace.

"Ah, my friends, who that had seen this could pride himself on youth and superior strength? Here was the champion of all those parts lying on his own floor, surrounded by the jugs, and mugs, and plates, he had won by conquering the other Samsons of the district, felled by a woman's hand armed with a bare bodkin.

"I spare you, my friends, the mother's agony and all the sorrow of the house — sorrow that didn't soften the hatred, and that you cannot wonder at. They set the emissaries of justice upon the culprit's track, and she was easily found; for no sooner did she hear the fatal news than she gave herself up to the law. She was tried at Marseilles, and it's a wonder to me that my good friend here does not remember that trial, for it caused no little sensation at the time. The friends of the deceased, and the mother especially, urged the prosecution with the utmost bitterness. The old woman, indeed, said that nothing could console her for the loss of her son but to see the murderess's head roll in the basket of the executioner. I was at the trial, and I remember little of it, except the few words spoken by the accused; those words seem somehow graven in my memory. She wore a peasant's dress, but her demeanor was that of a noble; she was depressed, but dignified and patient; never interrupted, and never complained. When her time came to speak in her defence, she said, —

"'Citizens, the public accuser has told you I killed my husband, and that, alas, is too true; but he has told you I killed him maliciously, and there he is quite mistaken. My husband was my all. I gave up father, friends, rank, wealth, everything for him, and I loved him dearly. He gave me a bitter provocation, and I reproached him cruelly. Then he struck me barbarously. What did I do? Did I seize some deadly weapon and strike him in return? No. I merely fled; and if he

had let me escape, this calamity would never have occurred. But he caught me, and seized me, and was dragging me back to a house where every man and woman was my enemy. My passion was great, I admit, but my fear was greater; and in fear I struck, not malice. Did I seek some deadly weapon? No; I struck with what was in my hand, scarcely knowing at the time what was in my hand. I believe that when the weak are attacked with overpowering strength they are permitted to make matters equal with some weapon. But can you call that puny instrument of woman's art a weapon? Was ever a strong man slain with such a thing before? My husband died by the finger of God. I was the unhappy instrument; and I am his truest mourner, and shall mourn him when all else have forgotten him. Even his mother has another son, but he was my all in this world. I say these things because they are the truth; not to avert punishment. How can you punish me? Imprisonment cannot add to my misery, and death would end it. Therefore I ask no mercy: be just.'

"Before these words, and their sad and noble delivery, the charge of wilful homicide dissolved away. The prisoner was condemned to two years' seclusion in a religious house.

"I visited there many times, and found her a changed woman. Her heart was broken and contrite; she wept for hours together, and in time she found consolation. Great was now her humility. When she regained her liberty I became her director.

"The penance I inflicted was — obscurity. For many years she has gained her own living under another name, and never revealed the story of her life. Some people say, with a sneer, 'The greater the sinner, the greater the saint.' But there is truth in it. Men can go on

sinning within certain bounds all their lives, and not feel themselves sinners; but when they commit a crime, the world helps them to undeceive themselves, and penitence enters when self-deception retires. That criminal has long been a truly pious woman, humble, industrious, faithful, self-denying, and full of Christian charity. On earth she is obscure by choice; but methinks her seat will be high in heaven."

The good curé's words melted us all; and now we all desired to know her in her humble condition and alleviate her lot.

But the curé would not hear of it. "No," said he. "This is a secret of the confessional. She is vowed to obscurity, and she must persevere to the end. But if you, Monsieur de Pontarlais, can forgive her the pain she once caused you, that would be a comfort to her."

"Ah, poor soul, with all my heart," cried he, and put his handkerchief to his eyes.

After this narrative and these reflections, we none of us felt disposed for small talk, and we soon retired to bed, all but the good curé, who was summoned hastily to Catherine's bedside by Suzon. That night the house seemed to me strangely unquiet. I was awakened several times by hurrying to and fro. But sleep soon comes again to careless youth. In the morning I found Suzon in tears, and my uncle himself very sad; the faithful Catherine was dead.

After breakfast the curé requested us to witness the official document he had to prepare on that melancholy occasion. He handed it to us with this remark: "The confessional has no secrets now." Judge my surprise when I read these words: "Died, the 10th day of July, 1821, of general prostration, Irène de Groucy, widow of Michel Flaubert."

My uncle took the picture down. "I prefer," said he,

"to think of my poor faithful Catherine as she was." I was of the same mind. But when my dear uncle died, and it became my own, I hung it again in a room I frequented but little.

Lately, in the decline of my own life, drawing near to that place where beautiful souls should be highest, I have given the once-loved picture a place of honor. Being so strange a reminiscence of my youth, I think sometimes of poor Catherine viewing her own picture with such grace, dignity, and pious humility; and I expect to find that white-robed saint more beautiful by far than the picture which so fascinated me.

REALITY.

Miss Sophia Jackson, in the State of Illinois, was a beautiful girl, and had a devoted lover, Ephraim Slade, a merchant's clerk. Their attachment was sullenly permitted by Miss Jackson's parents, but not encouraged; they thought she might look higher.

Sophia said, "Why, la! he was handsome and good, and loved her, and was not that enough?"

They said, "No; to marry beauty a man ought to be rich."

"Well," said Sophy, "he is on the way to it; he is in a merchant's office."

"It is a long road, for he is only a clerk."

The above is a fair specimen of the dialogue, and conveys as faint an idea of it as specimens generally do.

All this did not prevent Ephraim and Sophia from spending many happy hours together.

But presently another figure came on the scene — Mr. Jonathan Clarke. He took a fancy to Miss Jackson, and told her parents so, and that she was the wife for him, if she was disengaged. They said, "Well, now, there was a young clerk after her, but the man was too poor to marry her."

Now Mr. Jonathan Clarke was a wealthy speculator; so, on that information, he felt superior, and courted her

briskly. She complained to Ephraim. "The idea of their encouraging that fat fool to think of me!" said she. She called him old, though he was but thirty, and turned his person and sentiments into ridicule, though, in the opinion of sensible people, he was a comely man, full of good-sense and sagacity.

Mr. Clarke paid her compliments. Miss Jackson laughed, and reported them to Slade in a way to make him laugh too.

Mr. Clarke asked her to marry him. She said no; she was too young to think of that. She told Ephraim she had flatly refused him.

Mr. Clarke made her presents. She refused the first, and blushed, but was prevailed on to accept. She accepted the second and the third, without first refusing them.

She did not trouble Ephraim Slade with any portion of this detail. She was afraid it might give him pain.

Clarke wooed her so warmly that Ephraim got jealous and unhappy. He remonstrated. Sophia cried, and said it was all her parents' fault — forcing the man upon her.

Clarke was there every day. Ephraim scolded. Sophia was cross. They parted in anger. Sophia went home and snubbed Clarke. Clarke laughed, and said, "Take your time." He stuck there four hours. She came round, and was very civil.

Matters progressed. Ephraim always unhappy. Clarke always jolly. Parents in the same mind.

Clarke urged her to name the day.

"Never!"

Urged her again.

"Next year."

Urged her again before her parents. They put in their word. "Sophy, don't trifle any longer. You are overdoing it."

"There, there, do what you like with me," said the girl; "I am miserable!" and ran out crying.

Clarke and parents laughed, and stayed behind, and settled the day.

When Sophy found they had settled the day she sent for Ephraim, and told him with many tears. "Oh!" said she, "you little know what I have suffered this six months."

"My poor girl!" said Ephraim. "Let us elope and end it."

"What! My parents would curse me."

"Oh, they would forgive us in time."

"Never! You don't know them. No, my poor Ephraim, we are unfortunate. We can never be happy together. We must bow. I should die if this went on much longer."

"You are a fickle, faithless jade!" cried Ephraim, in agony.

"God forgive you, dear!" said she, and wept silently.

Then he tried to comfort her. Then she put her arm round his neck, and assured him she yielded to constraint, but her heart could never forget him; she was more unhappy than he, and always should be.

They parted, with many tears on both sides, and she married Clarke. At her earnest request Slade kept away from the ceremony; by that means she was not compelled to wear the air of a victim, but could fling the cloak of illusory happiness and gayety over her aching heart; and she did it too. She was as gay a bride as had been seen for some years in those parts.

Ephraim Slade was very unhappy. However, after a bit he comprehended the character of Sophia Clarke, *née* Jackson, and even imitated her. She had gone in for money, and so did he — only on the square; a detail she had omitted. Years went on; he became a partner

in the house, instead of a clerk. The girls set their caps at him, but he did not marry. Mrs. Clarke observed this, and secretly approved. Say she had married, that was no reason why *he* should. *Justice des femmes!*

Now you will observe that, by all the laws of fiction, Mrs. Clarke ought to have learned, to her cost, that money does not bring happiness, and ought to have been miserable — especially whenever she encountered the pale face of him whose love she valued too late.

Well, she broke all those laws, and went in for life as it is. She was happier than most wives. Her husband was kind, but not doting; a gentle master, but no slave; and she liked it. She had two beautiful children, and they helped fill her life. Her husband's gold smoothed her path, and his manly affection strewed it with flowers. She was not passionately devoted to him, but still, by the very laws of nature, the wife was fonder of Jonathan than the maid had ever been of Ephraim; not but what the latter remaining unmarried tickled her vanity, and so completed her content.

She passed six years in clover, and the clover in full bloom all the time. Nevertheless, gilt happiness is apt to get a rub sooner or later. Clarke had losses one upon another, and at last told her he was done for. He must go back to California and make another fortune. "Lucky the old folks made me settle a good lump on you," said he. "You are all right, and the children."

Away went stout-hearted Clarke, and left his wife behind. He knew the country, and went at all in the ring, and began to remake money fast.

His letters were not very frequent, nor models of conjugal love, but they had good qualities; one was their contents — a draft on New York.

Some mischievous person reported that he was often seen about with the same lady; but Mrs. Clarke did not believe that, the remittances being regular.

But presently both letters and remittances ceased. Then she believed the worst, and sent a bitter remonstrance.

She received no reply.

Then she wrote a bitterer one, and, for the first time since their union, cast Ephraim Slade in his teeth. "There he is," said she, "unmarried to this day, for my sake."

No reply even to this.

She went to her parents and told them how she was used.

They said they had foreseen it — that being a lie some people think it necessary to deliver themselves of before going seriously into any question — and then, after a few pros and cons, they bade her observe that her old lover, Ephraim Slade, was a rich man, a man unmarried, evidently for her sake, and if she was wise, she would look that way, and get rid of a mock husband, who was probably either dead or false, and, in any case, had deserted her.

"But what am I to *do?*" said Mrs. Clarke, affecting not to know what they were driving at.

"Why, sue for a divorce."

"Divorce Jonathan! Think of it! He is the father of my children, and he was a good husband to me all the time he was with me. It is all that nasty California." And she began to cry.

The old people told her she must take people as they were, not as they had been; and it was no fault of hers, nor California's, if her husband was a changed man.

In short, they pressed her hard to sue for a divorce, and let Slade know she was going to do it.

But the woman was still handsome and under thirty, and was not without a certain pride and delicacy that grace her sex even when they lack the more solid virtues.

"No," said she, "I will never go begging to any man. I'll not let Ephraim Slade think I divorced my husband just to get him. I'll part with Jonathan, since he has parted with me, and after that, I will take my chance. Ephraim Slade! he is not the only man in the world with eyes in his head."

So she sued for a divorce, and got it quite easy. Divorce is beautifully easy in the West.

When she was free, she had no longer any scruple about Ephraim. He lived at a town seven miles from her. She had a friend in that town. She paid her a visit. She let the other lady into her plans, and secured her co-operation. Mrs. X—— set it abroad that Mrs. Clarke was a widow; and, from one to another, Ephraim Slade was given to understand that a visit from him would be agreeable.

"Will it?" said Ephraim. "Then I'll go."

He called on her, and was received with a sweet, pensive tenderness. "Sit down, Ephraim — Mr. Slade," said she softly and tremulously, and left the room. She had scarcely cleared it when he heard her tell the female servant, with a sharp, imperious tone, to admit no other visitors. It did not seem the same voice. She came back to him melodious. "The sight of you after so many years upset me," said she. Then, after a pause and a sigh, "You look well."

"Oh, yes, I am all right. We are neither of us quite so young as we were, you know."

"No, indeed (with another sigh). Well, dear friend, I suppose you have heard. I am punished, you see, for my want of courage and fidelity. I have always been punished. But you could not know that. Perhaps, after all, you have been the happier of the two. I am sure I hope you have."

"Well, I'll tell you, Mrs. Clarke" — said he, in open, manly tones.

She stopped him. "Please don't call me Mrs. Clarke, when I have parted with the name forever. (*Sotto voce*) Call me Sophia."

"Well, then, Sophia, I'll tell you the truth. When you jilted me" —

"Oh!"

"And married Cl—— Who shall I say? Well, then, married *another*, because he had got more money than I had" —

"No, no! Ephraim, it was all my parents. But I will try and bear your reproaches. Go on."

"Well, then, of course I was awfully cut up. I was wild. I got a six-shooter to kill you and — the other."

"I wish you had," said she. She didn't wish anything of the kind.

"I am very glad I didn't then. I dropped the six-shooter and took to the moping and crying line."

"Poor Ephraim!"

"Oh, yes; I went through all the changes, and ended as other men do."

"And how is that?"

"Why, by getting over it."

"What! you have got over it?"

"Lord, yes! long ago."

"Oh, in-deed!" said she, bitterly. Then, with sly incredulity, "How is it you have never married?"

"Well, I'll tell you. When I found that money was everything with you girls, I calculated to go in for money too. So I speculated, like — the other, and made money. But when I had once begun to taste money-making, somehow I left off troubling about women. And, besides, I know a great many people, and I look coolly on, and what I see in every house has set me against marriage. Most of my married friends envy me, and say so. I don't envy any one of them, and don't pretend

to. Marriage! it is a bad institution. You have got clear of it, I hear. All the better for you. I mean to take a shorter road: I won't ever get into it."

This churl, then, who had drowned hot passion in the waves of time, and instead of nursing a passion for her all his days, had been hugging celibacy as man's choicest treasure, asked her coolly if there was anything he could do for her. Could he be of service in finding out investments, etc., or could he place either of the boys in the road to wealth? Instead of hating these poor children like a man, he seemed all the more inclined to serve them, that their absent parent had secured him the sweets of celibacy.

She was bursting with ire, but had the self-restraint to thank him, though very coldly, and to postpone all discussion of that kind to a future time. Then he shook hands with her and left her.

She was wounded to the core. It would have been very hard to wound her heart as deeply as this interview wounded her pride.

She sat down and shed tears of mortification.

She was aroused from that condition by a letter in a well-known hand. She opened it, all in a flutter: —

My dear Sophy, — You are a nice wife, you are! Here I have been slaving my life out for you, and shipwrecked, and nearly dead with a fever, and coming home rich again, and I asked you just to come from Chicago to New York to meet me. that have come all the way from China and San Francisco, and it is too much trouble. Did you ever hear of Lunham's dog that was so lazy he leaned against the wall to bark? It is very disheartening to a poor fellow that has played a man's part for you and the children. Now be a good girl, and meet me at Chicago to-morrow evening at 6 p.m. For, if you don't, by thunder, I'll take the children and absquatulate with them to Paris, or somewhere! I find the drafts on New York I sent

from China have never been presented. Reckon by that you never got them. Has that raised your dander? Well, it is not my fault; so put on your bonnet, and come and meet

Your affectionate husband,

JONATHAN CLARKE.

I sent my first letter to your father's house. I send this to your friend Mrs. X——.

Mrs. Clarke read this in such a tumult of emotions that her mind could not settle a moment on one thing. But when she had read it, the blood in her beating veins began to run cold.

What on earth should she do? Fall to the ground between two stools? No; that was a man's trick, and she was a woman, every inch.

She had not any time to lose; so she came to a rapid conclusion. Her acts will explain better than comments. She dressed, packed up one box, drove to the branch station, and got to Chicago. She bought an exquisite bonnet, took private apartments at a hotel, and employed an intelligent person to wait for her husband at the station, and call out his name, and give him a card, on which was written —

"Mrs. Jonathan Clarke,
"At the X—— Hotel."

This done, she gave her mind entirely to the decoration of her person.

The ancients, when they had done anything wrong and wanted to be forgiven, used to approach their judges with dishevelled hair and shabby clothes — *sordidis vestibus.*

This poor shallow woman, unenlightened by the wisdom of the ancients, thought the nicer a woman looked the likelier a man would be to forgive her — no matter what.

So she put on her best silk dress, and her new French hat, bought on purpose, and made her hair very neat, and gave her face a wash and a rub that added color. She did not rouge, because she calculated she should have to cry before the end of the play, and crying hard over rouge makes channels.

When she was as nice as could be, she sat down to wait for her *divorcé;* she might be compared to a fair spider which has spread her web to catch a wasp, but is sorely afraid that, when he does come, he will dash it all to ribbons.

The time came and passed. An expected character is always as slow to come as a watched pot to boil.

At last there was a murmur on the stairs; then a loud, hearty voice; then a blow at the door — you could not call it a tap — and in burst Jonathan Clarke, brown as a berry, beard a foot long — genial and loud, open-heart, California manners.

At sight of her he gave a hearty "Ah!" and came at her with a rush to clasp her to his manly bosom, and knocked over a little cane chair, gilt.

The lady, quaking internally, and trembling from head to foot, received him like the awful Siddons, with one hand nobly extended, forbidding his profane advance. "A word first, if you please, sir."

Then Clarke stood transfixed, with one foot advanced, and his arms in the air, like Ixion, when Juno turned cloud.

"You have ordered me to come here, sir, and you have no longer any right to order me; but I am come, you see, to tell you my mind. What! do you really think a wife is to be deserted and abandoned, most likely for some other woman, and then be whistled back into her place like a dog? No man shall use *me* so!"

"Why, what is the row? has a mad dog bitten you, ye cantankerous critter?"

"Not a letter for ten months, that is the matter!" cried Mrs. Clarke, loud and aggressive.

"That is not my fault. I wrote three from China, and sent you two drafts on New York."

"It is easy to say so: I don't believe it." (Louder and aggressiver.)

Clarke (bawling in his turn). I don't care whether you believe it or not. Nobody but you calls Jony Clarke a liar.

Mrs. Clarke (competing in violence). I believe one thing, that you were seen all about San Francisco with a lady. 'Twas to her you directed my letters and drafts: that is how I lost them. It is always the husband that is in fault, and not the post. (Very amicably all of a sudden.) How long were you in California after you came back from China?

"Two months."

"How often did you write in that time?" (Sharply.)

"Well, you see, I was always expecting to start for home."

"You never wrote once." (Very loud.)

"That was the reason."

"That and the lady." (Screaming loud.)

"Stuff! Give me a kiss, and no more nonsense."

(Solemnly.) "That I shall never do again. Husbands must be taught not to trifle with their wives' affections in this cruel way." (Tenderly.) "O Jonathan! how could you abandon me? What could you expect? I am not old; I am not ugly."

"D—n it all, if you have been playing any games," and he felt instinctively for a bowie-knife.

"Sir!" said the lady, in an awful tone, that subjugated the monster directly.

"Well, then," said he, sullenly, "don't talk nonsense. Please remember we are man and wife."

Mrs. Clarke (very gravely). Jonathan, we are not.

"Damnation! what do you mean?"

"If you are going into a passion, I won't tell you anything; I hate to be frightened. What language the man has picked up — in California!"

"Well, that's neither here nor there. You go on."

"Well, Jonathan, you know I have always been under the influence of my parents. It was at their wish I married you."

"That is not what you told me at the time."

"Oh, yes, I did; only you have forgotten. Well, when no word came from you for so many months, my parents were indignant, and they worked upon me so, and pestered me so — that — Jonathan, we are divorced."

The actress thought this was a good point to cry at, and cried accordingly.

Jonathan started at the announcement, swore a heartful, and then walked the room in rage and bitterness. "So then," said he, "you leave the woman you love, and the children whose smiles are your heaven; you lead the life of a dog for them, and when you come back, by G—d, the wife of your bosom has divorced you, just because a letter or two miscarried! That outweighs all you have done and suffered for her. Oh, you are crying, are you? What, you have given up facing it out, and laying the blame on me, have you?"

"Yes, dear; I find you were not to blame; it was — my parents."

"Your parents! Why, you are not a child, are you? You are the parent of my children, you little idiot; have you forgotten that?"

"No. Oh! oh! oh! I have acted hastily, and very, very wrong!"

"Come, that is a good deal for a pretty woman to

own. There, dry your eyes, and let us order dinner."

"What, dine with *you*?"

"Why, d—n it, it is not the first time by a few thousand."

"La, Jonathan, I *should* like, but I *mustn't*."

"Why not?"

"I should be compromised."

"What, with me?"

"Yes, with any gentleman. Do try and realize the situation, dear. *I am a single woman*."

Good Mr. Clarke — from California — delivered a string of curses so rapidly that they all ran into what Sir Walter calls a "clishmaclaver," even as when the ringers clash and jangle the church-bells.

Mrs. Clarke gave him time; but as soon as he was in a state to listen quietly, compelled him to realize *her* situation. "You see," said she, "I am obliged to be very particular now. Delicacy demands it. You remember poor Ephraim Slade?"

"Your old sweetheart. Confound him! has he been after you again?"

"Why, Jonathan, ask yourself. He has remained unmarried ever since; and when he heard I was free, of course he entertained hopes; but I kept him at a distance, and so (tenderly and regretfully) I must you. *I am a single woman*."

"Look me in the face, Sophy. You won't dine with me?"

"I'd give the world; but I *mustn't*, dear."

"Not if I twist your neck round, darling, if you don't?"

"No, dear. You shall kill me, if you please. But I am a respectable woman, and I will not brave the world. But I know I have acted rashly, foolishly, ungratefully,

and deserve to be killed. *Kill me, dear!* you'll forgive me then." With that she knelt down at his feet, crossed her hands over his knees, and looked up sweetly in his face with brimming eyes, waiting, yea, even requesting to be killed.

He looked at her with glistening eyes. "You cunning hussy," said he; "you know I would not hurt a hair of your head. What is to be done? I tell you what it is, Sophy, I have lived three years without a wife, and that is enough. I won't live any longer so; no, not a day. It shall be you or somebody else. Ah! what is that? a bell. I'll ring and order one. I've got lots of money. They are always to be had for that, you know."

"O Jonathan! don't talk so. It is scandalous. How can you get a wife all in a minute — by ringing?"

"If I can't, then the town-crier can. I'll hire him."

"For shame!"

"How is it to be, then? You that are so smart at dividing couples, you don't seem to be very clever in bringing 'em together again."

"It was my parents, Jonathan, not me. Well, dear, I always think when people are in a difficulty, the best thing is to go to some very *good* person for advice. Now the best people are the clergymen. There is one in this street, No. 18. Perhaps he could advise us."

Jonathan listened gravely for a little while, before he saw what she was at; but the moment he caught the idea so slyly conveyed, he slapped his thigh and shouted out, "You are a sensible girl. Come on!" And he almost dragged her to the clergyman. Not but what he found time to order a good dinner in the hall as they went.

The clergyman was out, but soon found; he remarried them, and they dined together man and wife.

They never mentioned grievances that night; and

Jonathan said, afterward, his second bridal was worth a dozen of his first; for the first time she was a child, and had to be courted up-hill; but the second time she was a woman, and knew what to say to a fellow.

Next day Mr. and Mrs. Clarke went over to ——. They drove about in an open carriage for some hours, and did a heap of shopping. They passed by Ephraim Slade's place of business much oftener than there was any need, and slower. It was Mrs. Clarke who drove. Jonathan sat and took it easy.

She drives to this day.

And Jonathan takes it easy.

TIT FOR TAT.

CHAPTER I.

It was a glaring afternoon in the short but fiery Russian summer. Two live pictures, one warm, one very cool, lay side by side.

A band of fifty peasant girls, in bright spotted tunics, snow-white leggings, and turban handkerchiefs, — blue, crimson, or yellow, — moved in line across the pale-green grass, and plied their white rakes with the free, broad, supple, and graceful movements of women whom no corset had ever confined and stiffened.

Close by this streak of vivid color moving in afternoon haze of potable gold over gentle green, stood a grove of ancient birch-trees with great, smooth silver stems; a cool brook babbled along in the deep shade, and on the carpet of green mosses, and among the silver columns, sat a lady, with noble but hardish features, in a gray dress and a dark-brown hood. Her attendant, a girl of thirteen, sparkled apart in pale blue, seated on the ground, nursing the lady's guitar.

This was the tamer picture of the two, yet, on paper, the more important; for the lady was, and is, a remarkable woman, Anna Petrovna Staropolsky, a true Russian aristocrat, ennobled, not by the breath of any modern ruler, but by antiquity, — local sovereignty, — and the

land she and hers had held and governed for a thousand years.

It may throw some light upon her character to present her before and after the emancipation of her slaves.

Her family had never maltreated serfs within the memory of man, and she inherited their humanity.

For all that, she was very haughty. But then her towering pride was balanced by two virtues and one foible. She had a feminine detestation of violence, — would not allow a horse to be whipped, far less a man or a woman. She was a wonderfully just woman, and, to come to her foible, she was *fanatica per la musica*, or, if aught so vulgar and strong as English may intrude into a joyous science whose terms are Italian, *music mad.*

This was so well known all over her vast estates that her serfs, if they wanted new isbahs, — *alias* log-huts, — a new peal of forty church-bells, mounting by perfect gradation from a muffin-man's up to a deaving dome of bell-metal, or, in short, any unusual favor, would get the priests or the deacons to versify their petition, and send it to the lady, with a solo, a quartet, and a little chorus. The following sequence of events could then be counted on. They would sing their prayer at her; she would listen politely, with a few winces; she would then ignore "the verbiage," as that intellectual oddity, the public singer, calls it, and fall tooth and nail upon the musical composition, correcting it a little peevishly. This done, she would proceed to their interpretation of their own music. "Let us read it right, such as it is," was her favorite formula.

When she had licked the thing into grammar and interpretation, her hard features used to mollify so she seemed another woman. Then a canny moujik, appointed beforehand to watch her countenance, would revert for a moment to "the verbiage."

"Oh! as to *that*," the lady would say, and concede the substantial favor with comparative indifference.

When the edict of emancipation came, and disarmed cruel proprietors, but took no substantial benefit from *her* without a full equivalent, she made a progress through her estates, and convened her people. She read and explained the ukase, and the compensatory clauses, and showed them she could make the change difficult and disagreeable to them in detail. "But," said she, "I shall do nothing of the kind. I shall exact no impossible purchases nor crippling compensations from *you*. Our father the Emperor takes nothing from me that I value, and he gives me good money, bearing five per cent, for indifferent land that brought me one per cent clear. He has relieved me of your taxes, your lawsuits, and your empty cupboards, and given me a good bargain, you a bad one. So let us settle matters beforehand. If you can make your fortunes with ten acres per house, in spite of taxes, increasing mouths, laziness, and your beloved corn-brandy, why, I give you leave to look down on Anna Petrovna, for she is your inferior in talent, and talent governs the world nowadays. But if you find independence, and farms the size of my garden, mean poverty now, and, when mouths multiply, hunger, then you can come to Anna Petrovna, just as you used, and we will share the good Emperor's five per cents."

She was as good as her word, and made the change easy by private contracts in the spirit of the enactment, but more lenient to the serfs than its literal clauses.

By these means, and the accumulated respect of ages, she retained all the power and influence she cared for, and this brings me fairly to my summer picture. Those fifty peasant girls were enfranchised serfs, who would not have put their hands to a rake for any other proprietor thereabouts. Yet they were working with a good

heart for Anna Petrovna at fourpence a day, and singing like mavises as they marched. Catinka Kusminoff sang on the left of the band, Daria Solovieff on the right.

They were now commencing the last drift of the whole field, and would soon sweep the edge of the grove, where Madame Staropolsky — as we English should call her — sat pale and listless. She was a widow, and her only son had betrayed symptoms of heart disease. Sad reminiscences clouded those lofty but somewhat angular features, and she looked gloomy, hard, and severe.

But it so happened that as the band of women came alongside this grove, which bounded the garden from the fields, Daria Solovieff took up the song with marvellous power and sweetness. She was all unconscious of a refined listener; it was out of doors, she was leading the whole band, and she sang *out* from a chest and frame whose free play had never been confined by stays, and with a superb voice, all power, volume, roundness, sweetness, bell-like clearness, and that sympathetic eloquence which pierces and thrills the heart.

In most parts of Europe this superb organ would have sung out in church, and been famous for miles around. But the Russians are still in some things Oriental; only men and boys must sing their anthems; so the greatest voice in the district was unknown to the greatest musician. She stood up from her seat and actually trembled — for she was Daria's counterpart, organized as finely to hear and feel as Daria to sing. The lady's lofty but hardish features seemed to soften all their outlines as she listened; a complacent, mild, and rapt expression overspread them; her clear gray eyes moistened, melted and deepened, and lo! she was beautiful.

She crept along the grove listening, and when the sound retired, directed her little servant to follow the band and invite Daria to come and help her prune roses next day.

The invitation was accepted with joy, for the work was pleasant, and the remuneration for working in Anna Petrovna's garden was not money, but some article of female dress or ornament. It might be only a ribbon or a cotton handkerchief, but even then it would be worth more than a woman's wage, and please her ten times more; the contemplation of a chiffon is a sacred joy, the feel of fourpence a mere human satisfaction.

So the next day came Daria, a tall, lithe, broad-shouldered lass, very fair, with hair like a new sovereign — pardon, O race Sclavonic, my British similes! — marvellous white skin, and color like a delicate rose, eyes of deep violet, and teeth incredibly white and even.

When she went among the flowers she just seemed to be one of them.

The lady of the house came out to her with gauntlets and scissors, and a servant and a gig umbrella, whereat the child of nature smiled, and revealed much ivory.

Madame snipped off dead roses along with her for nearly half an hour, then observed: "This is a waste of time. Come under that tree with me. Now sing me that song you sang yesterday in the field."

The fair cheek was dyed with blushes directly. "Me sing before you, Anna Petrovna!"

"Why not? Come, Daria, do not be afraid of one old woman who loves music, and can appreciate you better than most. Sing to me, my little pigeon."

The timid dove, thus encouraged, fixed her eyes steadily on the ground and cooed a little song.

The tears stood in the lady's eyes. "You are frightened still," said she; "but why? See, I do not praise you; and I weep. That is the best comment. You will not always be afraid of me."

"Oh, no; you are so kind."

Daria's shyness was soon overcome, and every other

day she had to come and play at gardening a bit, then work at music.

When the winter came her patroness could not do without her. She sent to old Kyril, Daria's father, and offered to adopt her. He did not seem charmed; said she was his only daughter, and he should miss her.

"Why, you will marry her, and so lose her," said madame.

He admitted that was the custom. "The go-between arranges a match, and one daughter after another leaves the nest. But I have only this one, and she is industrious and a song-bird; and I have forbidden the house to all these old women who yoke couples together blindfold. To be sure, there is a young fellow, a cousin of mine, comes over from the town on Sundays and brings Daria flowers and me a flask of vodka."

"Then he is welcome to one of you?"

"As snow to sledge-horses; but Daria gives him little encouragement. She puts up with him, that is all."

"You would not like a good house, and fifty acres more than the ten a bountiful state bestows on you, rent free forever?"

"Forgive me for contradicting you, Anna Petrovna; I should like them extremely."

"And I should like to adopt Daria."

The tender father altered his tone directly. "Anna Petrovna, it is not our custom to refuse you anything."

"And it is not your custom to lose anything by obliging me."

"That is well known."

After this, of course, the parties soon came to an understanding.

Daria was to be adopted, and some land and a house made over to her and her father as joint proprietors during his lifetime, to Daria after his decease.

Daria, during her father's lifetime, was to live with Madame Staropolsky as a sort of humble but valued companion.

When it was all settled, the only one of the three who had a misgiving was the promoter.

"This song-bird," said she to herself, "has already too much power over me. How will it be when she is a woman? Her voice bewitches me. She has no need to sing; if she but speaks she enchants me. Have I brought my mistress into the house?" This presentiment flashed through her mind, but did not abide at that time.

One Sunday she saw Daria strolling along the road with a young man. He parted with her at the door, but was a long time doing it, and gave her some flowers, and lingered and looked after her.

Anna Petrovna felt a twinge, and the next moment blushed for herself. "What, jealous!" said she. "The girl has certainly bewitched me."

She asked Daria, carelessly, who the young man was. Daria made no secret of the matter. "It is only Ivan Ulitch Koscko, who comes many miles every Sunday."

"To court you?"

"I suppose it is."

"Does he love you?"

"He says so."

"Do you love him?"

"Not much: but he is very good."

"Is he to marry you?"

"I do not know. I would rather be as I am."

"I wonder which you love best — that young man or me?"

"I could never love a young man as I love you, Anna Petrovna. It is quite different."

Madame Staropolsky looked keenly at her to see whether this was audacious humbug or pure innocence,

and it appeared to be the latter; so she embraced her warmly. Then Daria, who did not lack intelligence, said, "If you wish it, I will ask Ivan Ulitch not to come again."

This would have been agreeable to Madame Staropolsky, but her sense of justice stepped in. "No," said she; "I will interfere with no prior claims."

This lady played the violin in tune; the violoncello sonorously, not snorously; the piano finely; and the harp to perfection.

She soon enlarged her pupil's musical knowledge greatly, but was careful not to alter her style, which, indeed, was wonderfully natural and full of genius. She also instructed her in history, languages, and arithmetic, and seemed to grow younger now she had something young to teach.

Christmas came, and her son Alexis was expected, his education at St. Petersburg being finished. Until this year he had not visited these parts for some time. His mother used to go to the capital to spend the winter vacation with him there; the summer at Tsarskoe. But there was a famous portrait of him at seven years of age —a lovely boy, with hair like new-burnished copper, but wonderful dark eyes and brows, his dress a tunic and trousers of purple silk, the latter tucked into Wellington boots, purple cap with a short peacock's feather. We have Gainsborough's blue boy, but, really, this might be called the Russian purple boy. A wonder-striking picture of a beautiful original.

Daria had often stood before this purple boy, and wondered at his beauty. She even thought it was a pity such an angel should ever grow up, and deteriorate into a man.

The sledge was sent ten miles to meet Alexis, and while he was yet three miles distant the tinkling of the

bells announced him. On he came, at the rate of fifteen miles an hour, with three horses — a powerful black trotter in the middle, and two galloping bays, one on each side, all three with tails to stuff a sofa, and manes like lions. Everybody in the village turned out to welcome him; every dog left his occupation, and followed him on the spot; the sledge dashed up to the front veranda, the ready doors flew open, the family were all in the hall, ready with a loving welcome; and the thirty village dogs, having been now and then flogged for their hospitality, stood aloof in a semicircle, and were blissful with excitement, and barked sympathetic and loud. When the mother locked the son in her arms, the tears stood in Daria's eyes; but she was disappointed in his looks, after the picture; to be sure, he was muffled to the nose in furs, and his breath, frozen flying, had turned his mustache and eyebrows into snow. Beard he had none, or he might have passed for Father Christmas — and he was only twenty.

But in the evening he was half as big and three times as handsome.

His mother made Daria sing to him, and he was enraptured.

He gazed on her all the time with two glorious black eyes, and stealing a glance at him, as women will, she found him, like his mother, beautified by her own enchantment, and he seemed to resemble his portrait more and more.

From that first night he could hardly take his eyes off her. These grand orbs, always dwelling on her, troubled her heart and her senses, and by degrees elicited timid glances in return. These and the seductions of her voice completed his conquest; and he fell passionately in love with her. She saw and returned his love, but tried innocent artifices to conceal it. Her heart was in a tumult.

Hitherto she had been as cool as a cucumber with Ivan, and every other young man, and wondered what young women could see so attractive in them. Now, she was caught herself, and fluttered like a wild bird suddenly caged.

Ivan Ulitch Koscko, who could not make her love him, used to console himself for her coolness by saying it was her nature — a cool affection and moderate esteem was all she had to give to any man. So many an endured lover talks; but suddenly the right man comes, and straightway the icy Hecla reveals her infinite fires.

Alexis soon found an opportunity to tell Daria he adored her.

She panted with happiness first, and hid her blushing face; but the next moment she quivered with alarms.

"Oh, no, no!" she murmured, "you must not. What have I done? Your mother — she would never forgive me. It was not to steal her son's heart she brought me here." And the innocent girl was all misgivings, and began to cry.

Alexis consoled her and kissed her tears away, and would not part with her till she smiled again, and interchanged vows of love and constancy with him.

Under love's potent influence she left him radiant.

But when she thought it all over, and him no longer there to overpower her, her misgivings grew, and she was terrified. She had an insight into character, and saw beneath the surface of Anna Petrovna. That lady loved her, but would hate her if she stole the affections of her son, her idol.

Daria's deep eyes fixed themselves all of a sudden on the future. "Misfortune is coming here," she said.

Then she crossed herself, bowed her head piously in that attitude, and prayed long and earnestly.

Then she rose, and went straight to Anna Petrovna. She found her knitting mittens for Alexis.

She sat at her feet, and said, wearily, "Anna Petrovna, I ask leave to go home."

"Why? what is the matter?"

"My father."

"Is he unwell?"

"No. But he has not seen me for some time."

"Is it for long?"

"Not very long."

Anna Petrovna eyed her steadily. "Perhaps you are like me, of a jealous disposition in your little quiet way. Tell the truth now, my pigeon; you are jealous of Alosha."

"Me jealous of Alexis?"

"Oh, jealousy spares neither age nor sex. Come, you are — just a little. Confess now."

Daria was surprised; but she was silent at first; and then, being terribly afraid lest one so shrewd should discover her real sentiments, she had the tact and the self-defensive subtlety to defend herself so tamely against this charge that she left the impression but little disturbed.

Anna Petrovna determined to cure her by kindness, so she said, "Well, you shall go next week. But to-day we expect our cousin, Vladimir Alexéitch Plutitzin, on a short visit. He is musical, and I cannot afford to part with you while he is here."

Then Daria's heart bounded with delight. She had tried to go away, but was forcibly detained in paradise.

Vladimir Alexéitch Plutitzin arrived, — a keen, dark gentleman, forty years old, and a thorough man of the world; a gamester and a *roué*, bully or parasite, whichever suited his purpose, but most agreeable on the surface, and welcome to Madame Staropolsky on that

account and his relationship. He seemed so shallow she had never taken the trouble to look deep into him.

His principal object in this visit was to borrow money, and, as he could not do that all in a moment, he looked forward to a tedious visit.

But this fair singer made all the difference. He was charmed with her, and began to pay her attentions in the drollest way, half spooney, half condescending. He was very pertinacious, and Daria was rather offended and a little disgusted. But all she showed was complete coolness and civil apathy.

Vladimir Alexéitch, having plenty of vanity and experience, did not accept this as Ivan did. "This cucumber is in love with somebody," said he; and he looked out very sharp. He saw at once that Alexis was wrapped up in her, but that she was rather shy of him, and on her guard. That puzzled him a little. However, one Sunday he detected her talking with a young man under the front veranda. It was not love-making after the manner of Vladimir Alexéitch, but they seemed familiar and confidential: clearly he was the man.

Vladimir burned with spite, and he wreaked it. He went into the drawing-room, and there he found Alexis and his mother, seated apart. So he began upon Alexis. He said to him, too low for his mother to hear, "So our cantatrice has a lover."

Alexis stared, then changed color. "Daria a lover, — who?" He thought at first his own passion had been discovered by this shrewd person.

"Oh, that is more than I can tell you: some fellow of her own class, though. He is courting her at this moment."

Alexis turned ashy pale, and his lips blue. "I'll believe that when I see it," said he stoutly.

"See it, then, in the veranda," was the calm reply.

With that the serpent glided on to the mother.

Alexis waited a moment, and then sauntered out, with a ghastly attempt at indifference.

Once in the hall, he darted to the door, opened it, and found Daria and her faithful Ivan in calm conversation. The sight of the young man was enough for Alexis. He said angrily, "Daria, my mother wants you immediately."

"Farewell, then, Ivan," said Daria submissively, and entered the house at once. Alexis stood and cast a haughty stare on Ivan; and the poor fellow, who had walked ten miles for a word or two with Daria, returned disappointed.

CHAPTER II.

Meantime Anna Petrovna asked Vladimir Alexéitch what he had said to Alexis. "Oh, nothing particular, only that our fair cantatrice had a lover."

"Why, that is no news," said the lady. "But indeed he is not much of a lover, and I hope it will come to nothing. That is very selfish, for he is an old friend and a faithful one to her. His mother kept the district school at Griasansk, and taught Daria to read and write and work. Her son is a notary's clerk, and assisted her in her learning. Let me tell you she is a very fair scholar, not an ignorant savage like the rest of these girls. To be sure, her father has a head on his shoulders, and had sent her to school, contrary to the custom of the country."

That favorite topic of hers, the praises of her *protégée*, was cut unnaturally short by Daria in person. She came in, and, gliding up to her patroness with a sweet inclination of her whole body, said, "You sent for me, Anna Petrovna. Alexis Pavlovitch told me."

"Indeed! Then he divined my thought. But I did not send for you: I heard your friend was with you."

"He was."

"What have you done with him?"

"I told him to go."

"That you might come to me?"

"Certainly."

"That was rather hard upon him."

"It does not matter," said Daria composedly.

"Not to you, Daria; that is evident."

Alexis came in and flung himself into a chair, manifestly discomposed. Daria cast a swift glance at him, then looked down.

Anna Petrovna surprised this lightning glance and looked at her son, and then at Vladimir; then she turned her eyes inward, mystified and inquiring, and from that hour seemed to brood occasionally, and her features to stiffen.

Vladimir watched his poison work. Some days afterwards he joked Alexis about his passion for a girl who was already provided with a lover, but found him inaccessible to jealousy. The truth is, he and Daria had come to an explanation. "She loves nobody but me," said the young man proudly; "and no other man but me shall ever have her, not even you, my clever cousin."

"Oh, I make way for the head of the house, as in duty bound," said sneering Vladimir. "But when you have got her all to yourself, what do you mean to do with her? I am afraid, Alexis, she will get you into trouble. Her people are respectable. Your mother's morals are severe. She is attached to the girl. What on earth can you do with her?"

"I mean to marry her, if she will have me."

"Do what?"

"Marry her, man. What else can I do?"

Vladimir was incredulous and amused at first; then taking a survey of the young man's face, he saw there the iron resolution that he had observed in the boy's mother. He looked aghast. Alexis marry this blooming peasant, — a woman of another race, a child of nature! She would fill that sterile house with children, and *he* would die the beggar that he was. Vladimir did not speak all at once. At last he said, "You cannot: you are not of age."

"I shall be soon."

"Your mother would never consent."

"I fear not."

"Well, then" —

"I shall marry Daria."

When Alexis said this, and looked him full in the face, Vladimir turned his cold, pale Tartar eye away, and desperate thoughts flashed across him. Indeed, he felt capable of assassination. But prudence and the cunning of his breed suggested crafty measures first.

He controlled himself with a powerful effort, and said, quietly, "Such a marriage would break your mother's heart; and she has been a good friend to me. I cannot abet you in it. But I am sorry I treated a serious matter with levity."

Then he left him, and his brain went to work in earnest.

The truth is that a more dangerous man than Vladimir Alexévitch Plutitzin never entered an honest house. Crafty and selfish by nature, he was also by this time practically versed in wiles; and his great expectations, should Alexis die without issue, and his present ruin, made him think little of crime, though not of detection.

He was too cunning to go and tell Anna Petrovna all at once, and so reveal the mischief-maker to Alexis. He was silent days and days, but went into brown studies

before Anna Petrovna, to attract her attention. He succeeded. She began to watch him as well as her son, and at last she said to him one day, "There is something mysterious going on in this house, Vladimir."

"Ah, you have discovered it!"

"I have discovered there is *something*. What is it, if you please?"

"I do not like to tell you; and yet I ought, for you have been a good friend to me, and if I do not warn you, you will perhaps doubt my regard. I don't know what to do."

"Shall I help you? Alexis and Daria!"

"There, then, you have seen it."

"I see he is *extasié* with her, and no wonder, since I am. Luckily she has too much good sense."

"Anna Petrovna, my dear kinswoman and benefactress, it is my duty to undeceive you. She is more timid and more discreet, because she is a woman; but she is just as much in love. It is a passionate attachment on both sides, and — how shall I tell you? — marriage is to be the end of it."

"Marriage! My son — and my serf!"

"Serfs exist no more. We are all ladies and gentlemen, thanks to God and the Tsar."

Anna Petrovna turned pale, and her features hard as iron. "Viper," said she, not violently, but sadly. Then her breath came short, and she could not speak.

But after a little while this just woman half recanted. "No," said she, "*I* had no right to say that. She sought me not; *I* brought her into this house, and she was a treasure to me. *I* brought him into the house, and she saw her danger, and asked leave to go. But *I*, who ought to have been wiser than she, had no forethought. I have made my own trouble, and it is for me to mend it. There shall be no discussion on this subject. You

must not let Alexis know you have spoken to me, nor shall I speak to him."

Vladimir consented eagerly. It was not his game to quarrel with Alexis.

That very afternoon Madame Staropolsky said to Daria, "Daria, my little soul, you were right and I was wrong; you shall visit your father this afternoon."

Daria turned red and white by turns, and acquiesced, trembling at what this might mean. Two maids were sent to assist her in packing. That gave her no chance of delay.

In one hour a large sledge came round, filled with presents for her father. Anna Petrovna blessed her fervently, but with a feminine distinction kissed her coldly, enveloped her in rich furs, and packed her off *sans cérémonie*. She dashed over the hard snow for a mile or two, then through the village, sore envied, and followed by each cur, and at last landed triumphantly at her own farm and her father's, warmly welcomed, admired, and barked after; only the tears trickled down her cheeks from the door she quitted to the door she reached.

That evening the house looked blank. Everybody missed Daria, and Alexis kept looking at the door for her. At last he asked, with indifference ill-feigned, what had become of her.

"Oh," said his mother, "she has gone home. She wished to go last month, but I detained her. I wished you so to hear her sing."

She then turned the conversation adroitly and resolutely.

But Alexis as resolutely declined to utter anything but monosyllables. He could conceal neither his anger nor his unhappiness. He avoided the house except at meals, yawned in Vladimir's face, and even in his mother's; and once, when she asked tenderly why he

was so dull, replied that the house had lost its sunshine and its music.

This was a cruel stab to Anna Petrovna. She replied, grimly, "Then we will go to Petersburg earlier than usual, dear."

One day he cleared up and became as charming as ever.

Anna Petrovna, whose mother's heart had yearned for him, was comforted, and said to Vladimir, "Ah, youth soon forgets. Dear Alexis has come to his senses and recovered his spirits."

"So I see," was the reply. "But I do not interpret that as you do. I take it for granted he sees the girl every day."

"What," said Madame Staropolsky, "under her father's roof? He would not wrong me so, after all I have done for him. But I should like to know."

Artful Vladimir took her hand tenderly. "I don't like spying on Alexis, but you have a right to know, and you shall know."

She pressed his hand gratefully, then left him with a deep maternal sigh.

In a few days he made her his report. Alexis rode straight to the farm every day, and spent hours with Daria. Her father encouraged him, and, indeed, ordered the girl to receive him as her betrothed lover.

The mother's features set themselves like iron, but she uttered no impatient word this time. She just directed her servants to pack for Petersburg.

When Alexis heard this, he said he should prefer to stay behind until the full summer.

"No, my son," said Madame Staropolsky, calmly; "you must not abandon me altogether. If I have lost your affection, I retain my authority."

"So be it; I must obey," said he doggedly. "I am not of age. I shall be soon, though, thank Heaven!"

The iron pierced through the mother's heart. She winced, but she did not deign to speak.

That evening Alexis did not come home to dinner. He arrived about ten o'clock, with his eyes red and swollen, would take nothing but a glass of tea, and so to bed.

At the sight of his inoffensive sorrow, the mother's bowels began to yearn over her son. "O my friend," said she to her worst enemy, "what shall I do? He will not live long." Vladimir pricked up his ears at that. "Aneurism of the heart — very slight at present, but progressive. Why poison his short life? She is virtuous. It is only her birth. I am a miserable mother."

Her crafty counsellor trembled, but his cunning did not desert him.

"And I can't bear to see you weep," said he. "Yes, try the capital and its female attractions, and if they fail, let him marry his enfranchised serf, and found a plebeian line. I would rather endure that shame than see you and him really unhappy. But if you only knew how many of these unfortunate attachments I have seen cured, and the patient begin by hating and end by thanking his physician!"

"We will go to Petersburg to-morrow," said the lady firmly.

They made the journey accordingly. They took a house on the Krestoffsky Island, and by advice of Vladimir, furnished both Alexis and himself with large funds, aided by which, this Mentor set himself to corrupt his pupil.

Everything is to be bought in capitals, and the Russian capital contained women of good position, who were easily tempted to feign attachment to this Adonis, and cajole him with superlative art, which, by the way, in one case, became nature through the lovely baroness

falling really in love with him. With the assistance of these charmers, and constant letters from Daria, which he took the precaution to receive at a post-office, and post his own letters with his own hand, he passed three months rather gayly. He saw he was being cunningly dealt with, and being a Sclav himself, he kept demanding money for his pleasures, and certain imaginary debts of honor, and hoarding it for a virtuous and imprudent purpose.

As for Vladimir, he became easy about his pupil, and pushed his own interests, with the aid of his grateful patroness. Her vast lands and her economy had made her prodigiously rich and, by consequence, powerful; and, with her influence and the money she furnished, Vladimir got the promise of a police mastership in a town and district about seventy miles distant from Smirnovo.

But all of a sudden his complacency and the tranquillity of his patroness received a shock. Alexis disappeared, in spite of all the money invested to cure him of a virtuous attachment by pleasure, folly, and a little vice, if the good work could not be achieved without it. For some days he was sought high and low in St. Petersburg, and the police reaped a harvest before they found out, or, at all events, before they revealed, that he had hired a travelling carriage, taken a *permis de voyage*, and gone south post-haste.

Anna Petrovna hurled Vladimir after him, and Vladimir, whose appointment was just signed, donned a uniform, and when he left the railway, demanded post-horses anywhere in the name of the law, and achieved the journey to Smirnovo faster even than Alexis.

He dashed up to the door of the house. It flew open, as usual, without knock or ring.

"Alexis Pavlovitch?"

"Not here."

"Has he not been here?"

"Yes; slept here one night about two days ago."

Vladimir made no noise, but into his carriage again, and away to Daria's cottage.

Empty, all but an old woman as deaf as a post, and put in charge for no other reason.

From her he could get nothing; from the neighbors only this, that the old man and his daughter and Alexis had set forth on a journey, and neither they nor the troika nor the horses had been heard of since.

Plutitzin returned crestfallen to headquarters, wrote to Anna Petrovna, and then went to bed for twenty-four hours.

Next day he put on his uniform, galloped about the country, and tried to learn the direction those three fugitives had taken.

He cajoled, he threatened. "They mean marriage," said he, "and the man is a minor. His marriage will be annulled, and all who have aided and abbetted him, sent to Siberia."

The simple country folk swallowed this brag, coming out of a uniform. They trembled and offered conjectures, having no facts, and then he swore at them and galloped elsewhere. But when he had ridden two horses lame, it struck him all of a sudden that he was acting like a fool. Why hunt these culprits in the neighborhood they had left?

Within eighty miles — a mere step in Russia — was his new post, at Samara, and all the machinery of his office; here he was but a private person, cased in an irrelevant uniform.

That very night he wrote to the municipal authorities of Samara, and let them know he should arrive at his official residence on the morning of next Thursday.

He gave just time for this missive to get ahead of him, and then started. But he made two days of it, and inquired at all the stages. Nor were these inquiries fruitless.

Thirty miles from home he struck the scent of the fugitives, and they seemed really to have anticipated his track; but then it was nearly three weeks ago.

At the last stage before Samara he donned his uniform and a glorious military decoration he had obtained before he left the army of his own accord, because he was threatened with an inquiry based on his neglect to pay debts at cards, and, thus resplendent, he drew near the scene of his future power and glory — stipend moderate, money to be obtained by bribes indefinite.

As he surmounted a rising ground three miles from the town a peal of musical church-bells broke out — one of the drollest and prettiest things in Russia, on account of the bells ranging over three octaves, and the curious skill of the ringers in sometimes running a series, sometimes leaping off treble towers into profound wells of melody. Tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, b-o-m-e. Tinkle, bome, tinkle, tinkle, tinkle, bome.

All this tintinnabulation and boomen gratified Vladimir's vanity. With what quick eyes had adulation seen the coming magnate, and with what watchful fingers rung him into the town of Samara! so Vladimir read "the bells." He smiled, well pleased, and longed to be there; but he had another rise to surmount first, and as his jaded horses plodded up it, down glided an open calêche, with glossy and swift horses, and in it sat Alexis and Daria hand-in-hand; she with her cheek all love and blushes on his shoulder; he, seated erect and conscious, her protector and her lord.

The carriages passed each other rapidly, but in that moment Alexis drew himself higher, if possible, and his

black eye flashed a flame of unspeakable triumph on his baffled pursuer.

Then there whirled through the brain of Vladimir some such thoughts as these: "Without her father — church-bells — that look of triumph — useless to follow them — let him have her — she will keep him from marrying till he dies — this marriage illegal — I will annul it on the spot — *quietly*."

Revolving the details of this villanous scheme, he entered the town of Samara.

CHAPTER III.

VLADIMIR went straight to the church. The priest's office was vacant by his recent decease. The deacon was there. Vladimir terrified the simple man; told him he had taken part in an illegal act — the marriage of two minors, one of them under a false name. The woman a lady of rank; the *soi-disant* Alexis an enfranchised serf, whose real name was Kusmin Petroff.

"Is it possible?" said the dismayed deacon. "Why, her father attended the ceremony."

"Her father! Did he look like a nobleman?"

"No; more like a respectable peasant."

"Of course. It was her major-domo," said the unblushing Vladimir, "and it will cost him a trip to Siberia; and, if you are wise, you will endeavor not to accompany him."

"My father," said the poor man, "it all seemed honest; they sojourned here — more than a fortnight. Their banns were published. You cannot suspect me of complicity. I implore you not to bring me into trouble."

"Oh, as to that," said the chief of police, "all depends on your present conduct. Noble families do not love public scandal. If you place yourself under my orders now, I dare say I shall be able to protect you."

These terms were eagerly accepted.

"Now, then," said this grim functionary, "is this sham marriage registered?"

"Only on a slip of paper, preparatory to my entering it on the register."

"You will hand that paper to me."

"Here it is, my father."

"And the book of registration."

"Yes," said the deacon, faintly.

"A much higher authority than I care to name will decide whether there shall be a correct entry or none at all. While his Imperial Maj— while this grave matter is under consideration, make all future entries on loose paper *pro tem.*"

The book was handed over to the chief policeman, and returned in three weeks, with the remark that it had been to St. Petersburg in the interval.

The simple deacon received it with a genuflection. He thought that it had passed through the sacred hands of the father of his people.

Meantime Vladimir wrote to Anna Petrovna and told her all, addressed the letter, and burned it. He remembered that she had wavered, and, besides, he recollected her character. She was too scrupulous to co-operate with him in his sinister views, and indeed had not the same temptation.

He wrote briefly, to say that Alexis and Daria were living together as man and wife, and it was even reported that he had deceived her with a form of marriage; but that might be untrue.

Anna Petrovna wrote back to say she should return

to Smirnovo at once, and summoned him to her side, "for," said she, "I am alone in the world."

Instead of melting into tears at the sad words, Vladimir's eyes flashed with greed. The other day a pauper, and now all the domain of his powerful relative seemed to be separated from him only by one life, and that life not only precarious but doomed.

He left his post directly, appointed a substitute, who was to communicate with him on important occasions, and he was at Smirnovo to receive Anna Petrovna. She came, worn out with fatigue and the struggles of her maternal heart, and next day she was seriously ill. Physicians sent for — advised darkened room — relief from business and anxieties — and poisoned her a little with mild narcotics.

Vladimir now read all her letters, and replied to all except two. These were from Alexis and Daria, entreating pardon with a filial anxiety and a loving tenderness that would have melted the mother at once. But this domestic fiend suppressed them, and the young pair got no reply whatever.

This marred in some degree their short-lived happiness. Still, they hoped all from time, and recovering by degrees the cruel rebuff, they were so happy that every day they blessed each other, and wondered whether any other mortals had attained such bliss on this side heaven.

Alas! in the midst of their paradise Fate struck them down. Alarming symptoms attacked Alexis. Physicians were sent for, one after another, and all looked grave. Daria wrote wildly to his mother: "He is dying. Come, if you love him better than I do. Come, and take him from me forever. Only save him." Hope rose and fell, then dwindled altogether. Daria watched him day and night, and eyed every doctor's face so

piteously that they had not the heart to speak out; but their looks and tones were volumes. At last the greatest physician in the empire came and stood with his confrères over that sad bed. He felt the patient's heart, his head, his limbs. He said but one word: —

"*Moribundus!*"

Then he retired without losing a moment more, where science was as vain as ignorance.

Vladimir did not let Anna Petrovna see Daria's letter, but he went to her and said, with agitation, real or feigned: "I hear Alexis is ill. I must go to him. I love the boy. If he is seriously ill, let me tell him you forgive him. Do not run a risk of shortening his life."

The poor mother trembled, wept, and assented, and the hypocrite became dearer to her than ever.

He started at once for Petersburg, and, travelling day and night, soon reached the pleasant villa from which Daria's letter was written.

Outside were pink sun-blinds, marble pillars festooned with creepers, and all the luxuries of civilized existence; inside, the dire realities of life — the husband a corpse, the wife raving, and both of them in their prime. That no cruel feature might be absent, an official stood there, like an iron pillar, demanding the immediate interment of him, who, according to nature, had just begun to live.

There was no more temptation to be cruel. Vladimir buried the husband, got two good professional nurses for the wife, wrote feeling letters to the bereaved mother, and invited Daria's father to come to her at once. He even deceived himself into believing he was very sorry for all the hearts that were broken by this blow, and that he stayed in the capital to keep guard over the house of mourning, whereas what he stayed for was

to enjoy the pleasures of the capital, and get himself appointed by the state administrator to Alexis, who, like most that love well, had died intestate, and left his love to battle for the rights he could have secured her by a stroke of the pen in season.

Alexis had drawn the rents of Staropolsk, his patrimony, and there was money in the house; but Vladimir thought it wise to connive at that, and fasten on a larger booty. Though older in years, he was somehow heir-at-law to Alexis, and, being administrator, had only to help himself.

From such a mind it is a relief to turn to sacred sorrow. An old man conveyed home by easy stages a pale young woman in a full cap, worn to hide the loss, by grief and brain-fever, of her lovely golden hair. It was the broken-hearted Daria.

A mother bereaved of her only son sought comfort in religion, and awaited her own summons, with thanks to God that she had not many years to live alone in *this* cruel world. This was the brave Anna Petrovna.

CHAPTER IV.

In the second month of her widowhood her father told Daria she ought to demand her third.

"My third!" said she. "I have lost *him*, and would you comfort me with his money?" And she burst into such passionate weeping that the old man promised faithfully not to renew the subject.

In the fourth month of her widowhood she came and stood by her father as he was smoking his cigarette, put a hand light as a feather on his shoulder, looked down

upon the floor, and said, in a low but rather firm voice, "Yes."

"Yes, what?" asked the old man.

"You can ask for our thirds."

"Our thirds? Why, I have no claim."

"No, not you; but" —

"What! Daria, my little soul. You blush. Is it so! Never mind your old father. Yes; well, then, now you are a woman, and your thirds you shall have, the pair of ye, or I'm not a man."

By this time it was well known that Vladimir inherited and administered the estate of Alexis Pavlovitch Staropolsky, deceased; so Kyril Solovieff wrote to him with Russian politeness, hoped he was not premature or troublesome, but the widow of Alexis would be grateful if he would let her have her third, or a portion on account.

Vladimir, who had not been in a public office for nothing, wrote a line acknowledging receipt, and saying the matter should meet with due consideration.

And so it did. He did not like parting with a third, but he had vague fears of a public discussion. He felt inclined to write back that he could not recognize the marriage as a legal one, but would respect the sentiments of his deceased relative, and disburse to her the same sum as if the marriage had been legal.

But before he could quite make up his mind a report reached him which, vague as it was, alarmed him seriously. He instantly employed spies, and they soon let him know that Daria Solovieff asked for her thirds because she had another to provide for — the offspring of her beloved Alexis.

This was told him with such circumstance and detail as left no doubt possible; and so the weak woman, who the other day lay at his mercy, struck terror to the very

bones of this Machiavel; and all the better. It is a comfort to find that in the scheme of nature the weak can now and then confound the strong and cruel.

War to the knife now! This serf spawn, if it lived, would inherit the lands of Staropolsk and Smirnovo. Vladimir must not by word or deed admit the marriage.

He wrote, and denied all legal claim, but offered five thousand rubles out of respect for the memory of Alexis.

This was declined, and proceedings commenced. A lawyer got up the case for Daria, instructed by her father.

Vladimir prepared his own case, and spent money like water; got the deacon of Samara out of the way to a better place twelve hundred miles off; had famous counsel from St. Petersburg, etc.

The case was tried in the district court. The defence was, "No marriage at all, or else illegal by minority."

On the question of minority the defence was upset, the Solovieffs made a hit there: they brought witnesses out of the enemy's camp — the nurse of Alexis, who had noted the very hour of his birth, four o'clock in the morning of the 9th of May, 1846.

Now the witnesses swore he was married 9th of May, at 11 A.M.

Three witnesses who knew Alexis, and had seen him married, had been spirited away for the time by the gold of Plutitzin. Eighteen natives of the town gave secondary evidence — swore to the bride there present, and that the bridegroom was a young man with swarthy complexion and wonderful black eyes, who passed for Alexis Pavlovitch Staropolsky.

This evidence led up to the direct testimony of old Kyril Solovieff, that he had driven Alexis from Smirnovo to Samara, and given him at the altar his daughter there present.

The last witness was Daria herself. Her beauty and sorrow and angelic candor, coupled with her situation, which was now very manifest, and a touching justification of her proceedings both in defence of her good name and her other rights, won every heart, and indeed made every word she spoke seem gospel truth.

She deposed to her adoption by Anna Petrovna, her courtship by Alexis, their separation, his fidelity, their sojourn in Samara, their marriage, their cohabitation, her refusal to take these proceedings until she found herself pregnant.

When she was taken, sobbing and half fainting, out of the box, defence seemed impossible. Many persons present wept, and among them was a young lawyer who never forgot that trial, never for a moment misunderstood a single point of it. It was the faithful, forgiving Ivan Ulitch Koscko.

The defendant's counsel rose calmly and alleged fraud. He admitted the attachment between Alexis and the plaintiff, and argued that to possess this beautiful woman he had lent her his name upon conditions which she and her friends never violated till death had closed his lips.

The person she had legally married was some tool bought for the job, and to leave the country forever, and make way for the real possessor but fictitious husband.

Then they put in the book of registry, and, with a certain calm contempt, left their case entirely with the judge.

People stared and wondered.

The judge examined the book, and read from it: "May 9, 1866, married Kusmin Gavrilovitch Petroff and Daria Kirilovna Solovieff, strangers."

A chill ran round the court.

The judge asked the defendant's counsel in whose handwriting this entry was.

"In the same as the rest, apparently."

"And who wrote the rest?"

"We do not know for certain."

"Well, *I* must know before I admit it against sworn witnesses."

He retired to take some refreshment, and on his return they had witnesses to swear that the entry in question and the notices that preceded it, and thirty-five per cent that followed it, were all in the handwriting of the last deacon.

"Where is he?" asked the judge.

"He was promoted some time ago to a church on the confines of Siberia."

Then the judge expressed dissatisfaction at his not being there, and thereupon each counsel blamed the other. The plaintiff's counsel believed he had been spirited away. The defendant's counsel said that was an unworthy suspicion; the law relied on the book, not on the writer; he in many cases must be absent, since in many he was dead. It was for the other party, who had the book against them, to call the writer if they dared, and being plaintiff, they could have postponed the case until they had found him.

In this argument the barrister from the capital gained an advantage over the local advocate, and the judge nodded assent.

This concluded the trial, and the judge delivered the verdict and his reasons in a very few words.

"This is a strange case," said he, "a mysterious case. There is a conflict of evidence, all open to objection. The direct evidence for the plaintiff is respectable but interested: the evidence for the defendant is a book, and cannot be cross-examined. But then that book is the special evidence appointed by law to decide these cases. It can only be impugned by evidence of forgery

or addition, mutilation or adulteration of some kind or other. It is not so impugned in this case; therefore it binds me. The verdict is for the defendant, the marriage of the plaintiff to Alexis Pavlovitch Staropolsky being not proved according to law, and, indeed, rather disproved."

Daria's father went home furious at the defeat and the loss of money. Daria shed some patient tears, but bore the disappointment and the wrong with fortitude.

As the defeated ones drove out of the town in their humble vehicle, they were stopped by an old friend — Ivan Ulitch. The meeting made them both uneasy. They had dismissed him so curtly, and what had they gained? The farmer even expected an affront, or ironical sympathy. But Ivan was not of that sort. He was "humble fidelity" in person. Affectionate, not passionate, he had obeyed his beautiful friend, and left her in prosperity, but in her adversity he returned to her directly.

"Daria, my soul," said he, "do not be discouraged by this defeat. It is a fraud of some sort. Give me time; I shall unravel it. I live here now, and shall soon be a clerk no more, but a lawyer to defend your rights."

"Good Ivan — kind, faithful Ivan!" said Daria, through her tears. "What, are you still my friend?"

"More than ever, dear soul, now I see you wronged. Do not lose heart. This defeat is nothing. Your lawyer was weak: the other side were strong and unscrupulous, and have fought with gold and fraud. That is self-evident, though the fraud itself is obscure. No matter; I will work like a mole for you, and unravel the knavery."

Daria interrupted him. "No, Ivan Ulitch; that you esteem me still is a drop of comfort, welcome as water to the thirsty. But no more law for me!"

And so they parted.

Ivan, though he seemed to acquiesce, was not to be discouraged. For months and years he patiently groped beneath the surface of this case, yet never mentioned the case itself. He watched for the return of smuggled away witnesses; he listened in cafés and cabarets; he courted the priest and the deacon; he was artful, silent, patient, penetrating. Love by degrees made him as dangerous as greed had made Vladimir Alexéitch.

Meantime that victorious villain hurried away to his headquarters, and told Anna Petrovna there had been no difficulty after all. The very register of the place had shown that the person Daria was really married to was a serf.

"I do not doubt it," said Anna Petrovna; "but I cannot rejoice with you. Would to God my son had married her, and not died with *that* crime on his soul!"

Vladimir shrugged his shoulders, and made no reply. As for Anna Petrovna, she never recurred to the subject; and, indeed, she hated the very name of Daria Solovieff. She was obliged to hear it now and then, but she never uttered it of her own accord.

Daria became the mother of a beautiful boy, and the joys of maternity reconciled her to life. Youth and health and maternal joy fought against grief, and in time gave her back all her beauty, with a pensive tenderness that elevated it. Her position was painful, but the country people stood by her. The women instinctively sided with her, and laid all the blame on the pride of the nobles.

She called her boy Alexis, and he was as dark as she was fair. She had him well educated from his very infancy, and let everybody know that they must treat him like a noble, but herself like a peasant. She never went near Smirnovo, nor did Anna Petrovna ever come

her way. Yet they often thought of each other, and each wondered how she could have so mistaken the other's character. Their friends did not fail to keep the mutual repulsion alive, the impassable gulf open.

Ivan visited the cottage from time to time, and was always welcome. One year after the birth of Alexis he offered marriage to Daria. She thanked him for his fidelity, but calmly declined. This restricted him to one topic; and, to do him justice, the enduring fellow did not cool in it one bit merely because Daria would not marry him. He remained just as full of the law case and Plutitzin's knavery, to whose influence he had pretty well traced the false entry in the register, and the disappearance of the deacon, lost in that boundless empire, and separated from clerical functions, otherwise Ivan would have discovered him by his agents.

But Ivan's only eager listener was the old peasant. Daria had lost faith in human tribunals, and had no personal desire for wealth. With her the heart predominated over the pocket. Her great grief now was her alienation from the mother of Alexis, her old benefactress. She often said that if any one would only confine her in one prison with Anna Petrovna, she would regain her confidence and her love. But her old patroness was physically inaccessible to her — at the capital nine months in the year, and shut up the rest; dragons at every door, under the chief dragon Vladimir, who seldom went near his office, but just cannily bribed everybody who objected to his frequent absences.

So rolled the years away, till one day Ivan Ulitch, now a keen lawyer in good practice, came to the cottage, "bearded like the pard," and somewhat changed in manner — more authoritative.

"The time is come," said he; "the plum is ripe."

Daria rose quietly and was about to retire, but Ivan requested her to stay.

She said it was not necessary; her father would tell her; besides, Alexis was calling for her.

"Then let him come to you," said Ivan, firmly. "It is for him I have been working as well as for you. I think I have a right to look at him."

"Oh, yes," said Daria, coloring up, and brought the boy in, and with her native politeness said to him, "Alosha, this is a good friend to you and me; shake hands with him."

Alexis shook hands directly.

"And now sit quiet, my dove."

Her dove sat quiet, and opened two glorious eyes on Ivan Ulitch.

"Daria Kirilovna," said Ivan, "if you submit to that knave Plutitzin, you let him rob this boy out of his right. The moment your marriage is established, he is the owner of Staropolsk and the heir of Anna Petrovna. Now, do you love the son of Alexis Pavlovitch — great Heaven! how like he is to his father! — do you love him like a child, or like a woman?"

The poor thing held out her arms to Alexis with an inarticulate cry, the sacred music of a mother's heart. Alexis ran to her. She was all over him in a moment, and nestled his head in her bosom, and rocked a little with him. "Do I love my heart and soul? Do I love my pigeon of pigeons?"

"I love *you*, mammy," suggested Alexis.

"Ay, my heart of hearts! but not as your mammy loves you. How could you?"

The men said nothing, but their eyes were moist, and Ivan felt ashamed he had said anything that could be construed into a doubt. He began to stammer excuses.

"Nay, nay," said Daria. "I know what you meant, and I deserve it. The love of my precious has been all *I* needed. I ought to look forward to the days when he

will be a man, and perhaps ask why I neglected his interests, and his good name as well as mine. My faithful friend, if you are to be our lawyer, I will try once more — for my Alexis. I will face that dreadful court again for my Alexis."

"Victory!" cried Ivan Ulitch, starting up and waving his cap.

Alexis approved this behavior highly. It was so new in that staid house. "Victory!" he cried, and caught up his pork-pie to wave it, but was cut short, and nearly smothered with kisses.

"Here is a change of wind," said the old man dryly; "but excuse me, son Ivan, it is not victory yet. These young women they hang back and pull against you, and then all in a moment start off full gallop, and neat-leather reins won't hold them. But I must have my word too. The last trial cost me all my savings in one day. Will this cost as much?"

"The double!"

"And am I to pay it?"

"You will not pay one solkov. I shall pay it, and this boy's inheritance will repay it with interest."

"Good! On these terms law is a luxury."

"Not to me, if my best friend is to risk his money for us," said Daria.

"That is my business," retorted Ivan Ulitch, curtly.

Daria apologized with feigned humility, but made an appeal. "Now, father" —

"Why, girl," said he, "the longer we live, the more we learn. He is not the calf he was when he first got tethered to your petticoats. He is a ripe lawyer now, by all accounts, and as sharp as a vixen with seven cubs. For all that, Mr. Lawyer, I should like to know whether that register book will come against us."

"Of course it will; it is the pillar of the defence."

"Then it will beat us again."

"I think not."

"Then how" —

Ivan interrupted. "Kyril Kyrilovitch, you said right: 'the longer we live, the more we learn.' Well, I have lived long enough to learn that in ticklish cases it is best to tell nobody what cards we mean to play. The very birds of the air carry our words to the other side. I will say no more than this: I have spies in the very home of Anna Petrovna. At present she knows neither me nor Plutitzin. She shall know us both, and it is not *my* witnesses that the enemy's gold shall put out of the way during the trial. It is I who will bottle the wine, and keep it in cellar for use. All I require of you is not to breathe to a soul that we even intend to appeal against that judgment. If you breathe a syllable, you will cut your own throats and mine."

Before he left he recurred to this, and once more exacted a solemn promise of secrecy. This done, he cut his visit short and went home.

It would be out of place and unnecessary to follow Ivan Ulitch Koscko in all his acts. Suffice it to say that he now began to gather certain fruits he had been years maturing. But one of the things he did was, to the best of my belief, new in the history of mankind. In the first place, it was a piece of knavery done by an honest man. That is unusual, but far from unique. But then it was done for no personal gain, and mainly out of love of justice, and justice had little chance of success without the help of this injustice. To this singular situation add the act itself and its unique details, and I think you will come to my opinion that, old as the world is, this precise thing was never done upon its surface before that day.

Well, then, Ivan Ulitch and the new deacon were

bosom friends, and that friendship had been planted years ago, and sunned, and watered, and grown, and ripened for this one day's work.

The deacon went a day's journey, leaving Ivan some ecclesiastical deeds to decipher and comment on in his house. Ivan breakfasted with him, and, after his departure, showed the deacon's housekeeper the work he had before him, and said, "Now, Tatnia, mind, I am not here. I can't do such work as this if I am interrupted. Do not come near me till three o'clock, nor let any one else."

Tatiana, with whom he was a special favorite, promised faithfully, and proved a very dragon.

Ivan took out of his lawyer's bag a corkscrew, various phials containing inks and chemicals, paper, numberless pens, and other things not worth enumerating, and out of his pockets magnifiers set in spectacles, and things like surgeons' instruments.

He went to a little book-shelf, took out a book, and found a key; with this key he opened an old oak chest, clamped with iron, and found a book with vellum leaves and a parchment cover brownish with age. It was the register. This book was made near a century ago by a priest who was an enthusiast. Common as skins are in Russia, this use of vellum was very rare.

He read several pages. He put on magnifiers, and examined the fatal entry; then, without removing his magnifiers, he proceeded with his surgical instruments to efface the name of Kusmin Gavrilovitch Petroff. In this work he proceeded with singular gentleness and slowness. He was full two hours effacing that one name. Then he heated an iron the size of a walnut; and, after trying it on other parts of the book, ironed down his work so that it was no longer visible to the naked eye, but only to a strong magnifier.

Then, with various inks and various pens, he set to work to imitate on paper the handwriting of the late deacon, and the words Kusmin Gavrilovitch Petroff, for which he had previously searched when he read the other pages, and found an example readily, for it was a common name.

When he had mastered the imitation, he took a hand-magnifier, and wrote Kusmin Gavrilovitch Petroff over the place of the old signature. Then he put the book in the sun and let his work dry. It dried a trifle paler than the rest of the book, but with a crow's quill he added the requisite color here and there.

The work was hardly finished when a heavy knock at the door made him start and tremble.

CHAPTER V.

"WHAT is it?" said he.

"Five o'clock," replied the voice of Tatiana.

And he thought it was about one.

He begged for half an hour more, and began to tie up the old papers with fingers that trembled now for the first time.

He put away the register, locked the chest, put the key in its hiding-place, unbolted the door, and asked Tatiana for a glass of brandy.

She brought it him directly, and said he needed it.

"No matter," said he, "the work is done." He drank Tatiana's health, and went away gayly.

Tatiana went into the room, and found the pile of old papers all neatly done up and tied. "Musty old things!" said she. "'Tis a shame a comely young man like that must bury his nose in such old-world muck. Smells

like the grave; no wonder he got pale over them, the nasty trash!"

Soon after this Ivan appeared at the cottage with affidavits to be signed by Daria, Kyril, and others, and in due course moved for a new trial upon numberless depositions alleging fraud, suppression of evidence, inefficient inquiry, recent discoveries, non-existence of an imaginary husband palmed upon the court, etc.

The notice of motion was served on Anna Petrovna and Vladimir Alexéitch. Anna Petrovna declined to move hand or foot. Vladimir opposed by powerful counsel, but the court could not burke an inquiry supported by such a mass of affidavits.

Vladimir, however, was very successful in another branch of policy. Even as Fabius wore out Annibal, he baffled the plaintiff, "*ad cunctando restituit rem.*"

First, Anna Petrovna, whom he had the effrontery to call his leading witness, though he knew "oxen and twain ropes would not drag her" into court.

Then at the end of three months he was ill himself.

Then, just as the trial was coming on, he could not find the late deacon. He had suddenly disappeared from Russia, and was said to be in Constantinople.

And so he sickened the adversaries' hearts, and they began to fear the new trial would not come on in their lifetime, if at all.

It was actually delayed eighteen months by these acts. But Ivan was not idle. He got the local press to insert timid hints of a most important trial unreasonably delayed. He even got a hint conveyed to the president that the right of postponement was being extended to a defeat of justice, and at last a sturdy judge said, "No. At the last trial you relied mainly on an evidence that is easy of access. It is a sufficient defence, and you disclose no other. The cause ought to be tried during the lifetime of all the parties interested."

Then he appointed a day.

The trial came on with great expectation, in the leading court of Petersburg.

This time there were three judges.

To avoid weariness, I shall confine myself to such features of this trial as were new.

At the first trial Daria was dressed like a lady, and was interesting by her pale beauty and manifest pregnancy.

At this trial she was more beautiful, but dressed like a superior peasant, and her lovely boy like a noble, in rich silk tunic, boots, and cap with feather. So with a woman's subtlety did she convey that she came there for her son's rights, not her own.

The court was full of ladies, and they all found means to telegraph their sympathy, and keep up her fainting heart as she sat there, with her boy's hand in hers.

As to the evidence, the depositions of the old witnesses were taken down by the local court, and merely read at Petersburg. To these were now added certain facts, also proved on the spot, one being the adoption by Anna Petrovna of their client. They proved by many female witnesses her virtue from her youth, and that she was not the woman to live paramour with any man.

They were more particular as to the banns, and proved by oral testimony of several persons that not Kusmin Petroff, but Alexis Staropolsky, was cried in church with Daria Solovieff.

They then tried to prove a negative, that nobody had seen Petroff, but one of the judges stopped them. Said he, "It does not lie on you to produce Petroff. The other side will do that."

"We doubt it," said the advocate.

"Then all the better for you," said the judge.

From Daria herself they elicited that no man called

Petroff had ever written or spoken to her either before or after her marriage, and that ten minutes after the wedding she and Alexis had met Vladimir Alexéitch, the real defendant, just outside the town, and her husband and he had exchanged looks of defiance.

They proved by another witness the arrival of Vladimir in the town about half an hour after the wedding, and that he was seen to go into the church at once and come out with the deacon.

Vladimir, there present, began to perspire at every pore.

When the defendant's turn came, his counsel told the court all this had been put forward at the last trial, and had been met triumphantly by an obvious solution; viz., that the late Alexis Staropolsky had loved a beautiful woman who had never deviated from the paths of virtue before, and was only persuaded under cover of a marriage ceremony. At that point, however, the young noble had protected himself against a *mésalliance*, and substituted a convenient husband, who was to disappear, and did disappear; but the good, simple deacon had recorded all he saw or divined — the real marriage.

"A real marriage without banns," suggested one of the judges.

"So it appears," said counsel, indifferently. "I am not here to bind the plaintiff to Petroff, but to detach her from Staropolsky. The register is here. The plaintiff married Petroff or *nobody*. The proof is technical, and is the proof the law demands. This court does not sit to make the law, nor to break the law, but to find the law."

"That is so," said the president. "Let me see the book."

The book was handed up. The judges examined it, and all looked grave.

Counsel proceeded to prove the handwriting, as before, by secondary evidence.

One of the judges objected. "This writing is opposed to such a weight of oral testimony that we shall expect to see the writer of it."

Counsel informed the court that they had hunted Russia for him, but could not find him. "For years after this business he lived near Viatka, but now we have lost sight of him. Had the plaintiff appealed in a reasonable time, we should have had the benefit of his personal evidence."

"There is something in that," said the judge. Another remarked that entries in the same handwriting preceded and followed the entry in question. A third judge found another Petroff exactly like the writing of the fatal Petroff, and so, after a snarl or two, they excused the absence of the old deacon.

Vladimir's counsel whispered him, "You are lucky; the case is won."

The judges retired to take some refreshment, and agree upon their judgment.

They left the register behind them. Ivan got it from the clerk and examined it carefully. The other side looked on sneeringly.

Ivan moved his finger over the entry, and whispered, "It feels rough here."

"Indeed," said his counsel. "Yes, I think it does. Don't say anything; get me a magnifier."

Ivan went out and soon found a magnifier, having brought three with him into court for this little comedy. Counsel applied it.

"The vellum appears to be scraped in places," said he. "Now let me see. We will flatter the president." Just then the judges entered, and this foxy counsel said, respectfully, "We have found something rather curious

in this entry, but my eyes are not so good as your excellency's. Would you object to examine it with a magnifier?"

The judge nodded assent. The book and magnifier were handed up to him. He examined them carefully, and said that he thought some name had been erased and another written over it.

At that there was an excited murmur.

"But," said he, "we must take evidence, for this is a serious matter. You must call experts. And *you*, please call experts on your side, for they seldom agree."

The trial was postponed an hour, and the court seemed invaded with bees.

Ivan got experts, and sat quaking and wondering how much experts really knew. "*We* suspect erasure," said he, to guide them.

In the box those two saw erasure of some word previous to the writing of Petroff, but they could not say what word it was. Did not think it was Petroff.

The other two saw erasures, or else scraping, but thought it was rather the light scraping of vellum that is sometimes done to get rid of the grease, etc., and make a better signature; but agreed with the others that the words were written over the scraping.

One of the plaintiff's experts was recalled, and asked his opinion of that evidence.

Said he, "I was surprised at it, because in preparing parchment for writing, nobody scrapes in the form of the coming signature; one scrapes a straight strip."

Here the judge interposed his good sense. "Look through the book," said he, "and tell me in how many places the vellum has been scraped before writing."

He looked, and could not find one but this entry.

They battled over it to and fro, and at last one of the experts swore that Daria's name and Petroff's were not

written with exactly the same ink; more gum in the latter.

After a long battle of experts the judges compared notes, and the president delivered judgment: —

"This is the case of Substance *v.* Shadow. Here is a weight of evidence to prove that the plaintiff is a virtuous woman, adopted for her superior qualities by the mother of the deceased, and that mother, described before the trial as a leading witness, does not appear to contradict her on oath. The plaintiff and Alexis Staropolsky are traced to Samara, seen there as lovers by many; their banns are called, and they are accompanied to church by living witnesses. They go from the church-door and meet the defendant, who dares not enter the witness-box and deny this. They cohabit, and a son is born, but the husband dies. This calamity is taken advantage of to defeat the right with shadows. The first shadow is Kusmin Gavrilovitch Petroff; he is never seen to enter the church-door or leave it. If he was present at the ceremony, he came in at the window, departed out of the window, and vanished into space. But more probably he is a *nom de plume.* A certain deacon erased some other name, and then wrote over the vacancy this *nom de plume,* and then made himself a shadow. We need not go into conjectures as to what name was originally written in that registry. That might be necessary under other circumstances, but here there is a chain of evidence of living witnesses to prove the marriage of Daria Kirilovna Solovieff and Alexis Pavlovitch Staropolsky. It is encountered by no man and no *thing,* but a mutilated book, recording a *nom de plume* upon an erasure. The judgment must be for the plaintiff. The marriage was legal, and her son is legitimate. Their material rights will no doubt be protected in another court upon due application."

The people rose, the ladies waved their handkerchiefs to Daria and her beautiful boy, and he actually kissed his hand to them with the instinct of his race.

Out of court there was a joyful meeting, and Daria actually took Ivan by the shoulders and kissed him on both cheeks. But she was away again so quick that the enraptured but modest lover never kissed her in return, he was so taken by surprise. However, he remembered the gentle onslaught with rapture. He sent her home with certain instructions. He remained to do her business. The case was reported, and he sent six copies of journals to the house of Anna Petrovna. One of the two copies sent to herself was in a light parcel surrounded by lace, for he felt sure Vladimir had taken measures to intercept information of any kind.

He then moved the Orphan Court to attach the separate estate of Alexis deceased, give the widow her third, and put the rest in trust for Alexis junior.

The other party, however, asked a brief delay to argue this, and meantime, gave notice of appeal to the Senate on the question of marriage and legitimacy.

Vladimir wrote to Anna Petrovna, bidding her be under no anxiety as to the final result. They should accuse the other side of tampering with the register.

However, when this letter reached her, Anna Petrovna was another woman. The journals directed to her house were intercepted, but the parcel of lace reached her, and inside it was the report, and this line:

"Sent in this form because important communications to you have been constantly intercepted since you put yourself in the power of your son's worst enemy."

"Can this be so?" said Madame Staropolsky. "No, it is a calumny. I will not read this paper." She tossed it from her.

On second thoughts she would read it, out of curiosity, just to see by what arts these people had deceived the judges.

She read the report word for word; read it with carefully-nursed prejudice, fighting against native justice and good sense, and a sort of chill came over her. She had resigned her intelligence to Vladimir for seven years. Now she began to resume it.

"Oh, foolish woman," she said, "to go on year after year hearing but one side in such a case as this! Virtuous! Yes, she was; and he impetuous and wilful. How often have these two things led to a *mésalliance!*"

She went over all the points of the judgment, and could not gainsay them.

She sat all day and brooded over the past, and digested the matter, and was sore perplexed. Next day, while she was brooding, the old nurse of the family, whom Vladimir had been unable to corrupt, put into her hands a note.

"From whom?" she asked.

"From one who loves you, my heart's soul."

"Ah! What, has she bewitched *thee?*" She opened the note with compressed lips, but hands that trembled a little.

ANNA PETROVNA, — How can we deceive you? You have eyes and ears, and more wisdom than the judges; pray, pray let us come to your feet for judgment. I will abandon all my rights if you look us in the face and bid me. DARIA.

"The witch!" said Madame Petrovna, trembling a little. "She thinks I cannot resist her voice. And can I? Ay, nurse, she will abandon her rights, but not her son's."

"Can you blame her, my heart?"

"No," said the lady, with a blunt honesty all her own.

Then she sat down and wrote, with her most austere face, "Come, if you have the courage to meet the mother of Alexis."

She sent the nurse off with this in a fast troika; and when the nurse was gone she regretted it. Daria was a woman now, and a mother defending her child. What chance would the truth have if she resisted it with that voice of hers, and all a mother's art?

Then again she thought, "No, I have my eyes as well as my ears, and I am a mother, too. She cannot deceive me."

Some hours passed, and the carriage did not return.

Then she said, "I thought not. It was bravado. She is afraid to come."

Then she began to be sorry Daria was afraid to come.

Meantime, Daria was dressing the boy in a suit she had bought in St. Petersburg expressly for this long-meditated, longed-for, and dreaded interview. The suit was the very richest purple silk — cap, tunic, and trousers tucked into Wellington boots; in the cap a short peacock's feather. This was all the motherly art she practised. She prepared no tale nor bewitching accents, and she trembled at what she was going to do.

Anna Petrovna, finding she did not come, rang and inquired whether the nurse had come back.

"No."

"Has the carriage returned?"

"No."

Another hour of doubt, and wheels were heard.

Anna Petrovna seated herself in state, and steeled herself.

The door opened softly, and two figures came toward her down the vast apartment.

It was the young Alexis and his mother. I put him first because his mother did so. She kept him a little

before her to bear the brunt; with a white hand on his shoulder she advanced him, and half followed, like a bending lily, with sweet, obsequious, Oriental grace.

As they advanced, Anna Petrovna rose rather haughtily at first; but no sooner were they near her than she uttered a cry so loud, so passionate, though devoid of terror, that it pierced and thrilled all hearts without alarming them.

"My boy, my child, come back from the dead — where — how? Am I mad — am I dreaming? No, it is my child, my beautiful child. He is seven years old — the painter has just left. Jesu! this is Thy doing. Thou hast had pity on another bereaved mother."

Her age left her. She was down on her knees before the boy in a moment, and held him tight, and put back his hair, and gazed into his eyes, and devoured him with kisses. "Lawyers, witnesses, judges, mortal men, this is beyond your power. Nature speaks. God gives me back my darling from the dead. Bless *you* for giving me back my own — my own, own, own. To my arms, my children!" Then all three were locked in one embrace, and the tears fell like rain. Blessed, balmy dew of loving hearts too long estranged!

CHAPTER VI.

There are scenes that cannot be prolonged on paper. It would chill them. I shall only say that, long after the first wild emotion had subsided, Anna Petrovna and her new-found daughter could not part, even for a moment, but must sit with clasped hands looking at their child, to whom liberty was conceded in virtue of his sex, and he roamed the apartments inquisitive, followed by four eyes.

Another carriage was sent to the cottage for clothes. Daria and her boy were kept forever; and, to close the salient incidents of the day, Anna Petrovna hurried off a letter to Vladimir, peremptorily forbidding him to appeal against the decision, and promising him, on that condition, a liberal allowance during his lifetime out of the personal estate of the writer, for she had saved a large sum on the estate.

Two days later came Ivan Ulitch, who had been at the cottage and learned the reconciliation. The object of his visit was to secure his beloved Daria from molestation from Vladimir Alexéitch, who, he felt sure, would return very soon. He brought with him a hangdog-looking fellow, who had been a servant in the great house, and expelled. Ivan sought an interview. Daria's influence secured it to him directly. He came into the room with this fellow crouching behind him.

Anna Petrovna, with her quick eye, recognized both Ivan and the man directly.

"I am pleased," said she, "to receive a faithful friend of my dear daughter, and sorry to see him in bad company."

"Madame," said Ivan, "do not regard him as anything but a minister of justice. A greater villain than he ever was intercepted two letters that even a fiend might have spared. This poor knave found them afterward in Vladimir's pocket, read them, and copied their contents, and placed his copies in the envelopes. Pray God for fortitude, dear lady, to read these letters, and know your enemies, since now you know your friends."

As he spoke he held out two letters. Anna Petrovna took them slowly. She opened one of them with a piteous cry. It was from Alexis, announcing his marriage, but protesting love and duty, and asking pardon in tender and most respectful terms. "Our lives," said he, "shall be given to reconcile you to my happiness."

While she read her face was so awful and so pitiful that by tacit consent they all retired from the room, and left her to see how she had been abused. When they came back they found her on her knees. She had been weeping bitterly to think that her son had died unforgiven because she had been deceived by a reptile.

As she suffered deeply, so she acted earnestly.

She called all her servants, and gave them a stern order.

She dismissed the steward on the spot for complicity with Vladimir, and she offered Ivan the place, with rooms in the house. He embraced the offer at once, to be near Daria.

Daria and she were rocking together, and Daria's sweet voice was comforting her with a long prospect of love and peace, when grinding wheels and barking curs announced the return of Vladimir.

Ivan left the room hastily, saying, "Leave him to me."

For the first time in the memory of man, the great door of that house did not open to a visitor. Vladimir had to knock. The hall re-echoed with the heavy hammer.

Then the door opened slowly, and displayed a phalanx of servants planted there grimly, not to receive but to obstruct.

They forbade him, by order of Anna Petrovna, to enter, and were as insolent as they had been obsequious.

He threatened violence. They prepared to resort to it. When he saw that, the Asiatic reappeared in him. "May I ask for a reason?" said he very civilly.

Ivan stepped forward. "Sir," said he, "a dishonest servant took two letters you intercepted. They were written at Petersburg after the marriage. He substituted copies, and the bereaved mother is weeping over the originals"

"Ah!" said Vladimir, and was silent. He literally fled. His face was never seen again in that part of Russia. Yet he had the hardihood to claim the promise of a pension; and that high-minded woman, who could not break a promise, flung it him yearly through her steward, Ivan Ulitch.

Balmy peace and love descended now on the house, and abode there. Alexis and Ivan grew older, but Anna Petrovna younger. Her daughter's voice and her daughter's love were ever-flowing fountains of gentle joy; still, like Naomi of old, her bliss was in her boy. His father and he seemed blended in her heart, and that heart grew green again.

Ivan is calmly happy in the present, and in the certainty that Daria will never marry any man but him, and in the hope that one day Anna Petrovna will let him marry her. At present he is afraid to ask her for the mother of Alexis. But Alexis is paving the way by calling him "my father." It rests with Anna Petrovna, for, if she says the word, Daria will marry Ivan merely to please a good friend, and afterward be surprised to find how happy he can make her.

He has never revealed, and never will, that masterstroke of fraud with which he baffled fraud, and perpetuated right by wrong.

He is right not to boast of it, and I hope I may not be doing ill to record it. The expression so many French writers delight in, "a pious fraud," is the most Satanic phrase I know.

I did not invent the manœuvre which is the point of this tale, and I pray Heaven no man may imitate it.

RUS.

[My dear lamented brother, William Barrington Reade, was first a sailor, then a soldier, then a county squire, and had from his youth an eye for character and live facts worth noting by sea or land. He furnished me from his experiences several tid-bits that figure in my printed works; for instance, in "Hard Cash," the character and fate of Maxley, and the manœuvres of the square-rigged vessel attacked by the schooner; also the mad yachtsman, and his imitation of piracy in "The Jilt," etc. So now I offer the public his little study of a real character in rural life. Indeed, such quiet things may serve to relieve the general character of my work; for, pen in hand, I am fond of hot passions and pictorial incidents, and, like the historians, care too little for the "middle of humanity."]

George Moore, a shoemaker, with a shock head of black hair, a new wife, half a hundred of leather, and two sovereigns, came over from Ewelme to Ipsden, and applied to my father for a cottage on Scott's Common. It was a very large cottage; the kitchen between twenty and thirty feet long; old style, smoked rafters, diamond panes, etc.

A shed, pigsty, and two paddocks went with the tenement; rent of the lot, eleven pounds. Moore became the tenant, made boots and shoes incessantly for years, and sold them at Henley, Reading, or Wallingford market. He would carry in a sackful on his back, stand behind them in the market-place, and, if he got rid of them, would often buy a pig or a cow, or even a pony, with such excellent judgment that he always made a profit;

and when he bought at a fair he often sold his purchase on the road, for the nimble shilling tempted him. One of his declared axioms was, "Quick come and safe keep."

In 1849 my brother inherited the Ipsden estates, and a year or two afterward occupied an old house of his near Scott's Common, and so he became Mr. Moore's neighbor. He soon found out to his delight that this shoemaker was a character, his leading traits ostentatious parsimony, humorous avarice, and jolly dissatisfaction; his phraseology a curious mixture of rural dialect and metropolitan acumen.

As many of his sayings sounded like proverbs, my brother once, to gratify him doubly, said, "Mr. Moore, neighbors should be neighborly," and set him to measure his growing family for shoes. He might as well have given the order to Procrustes; Moore made shoes for *shops;* he expected feet to fit his shoes; and, after all, live leather is more yielding than dead.

The bill was settled one halfpenny short. From that day, although Moore's conversations with my brother rambled over various topics, they always ended one way, — "Beg pardon, sir, but there was a halfpenny to come last account."

Then the humorist would fumble for this halfpenny, but never find it. He used it as a little seton.

Moore once related to him his visit to a road-side hotel in the old coaching-days.

"I came in mortal hungry, Squire, and there was a table spread. Don't know as ever I saw so much vittles all at one time. Found out afterward it was for the passengers' dinner. Sets me down just before the beautifullest ham — a picture — takes the knife and fork, and sets there with my fistes (pronounced mediævally "fisteys") on the table, and the knife and fork in 'em.

'Landlerd,' says I to a chap in a parson's tie, 'be you the landlerd?' No; he was the waiter. 'Then,' says I, 'you tell the landlerd I wants to speak to 'un very particular.' So presently the landlerd comes, as round as a bar'l mostly. 'Landlerd,' says I, with my fistes on the table, and the knife p'inting uppards, 'I must know what the reckoning ool be afer I sticks my ferk into 't.'"

Somebody with whom he traded wanted one shilling and tenpence more than his due in a considerable transaction. Moore made the parish ring.

However, he appears in this case to have thought he owed mankind in general, and Scott's Common in particular, an explanation, so he gave it to the gamekeeper, Will Johnstone — Johnstone retailed it at the "Black Horse," and round it came to my humorist *via* the gardener.

"Ye may say one shilling and tenpence is a very little sum. Here's Moore running all over the parish after one ten. But it's a beginning. A text is a little thing; but parson can make half an hour's sermon on't."

Rustic Oxfordshire has never within the memory of man accepted that peevish rule of the grammarians, "Two negatives make an affirmative." We have a grammatical creed worth two of that. We hold that less than two negatives might be taken for an affirmative, or at least for an assent.

A Cambridge man, whom his college, St. John's, transplanted into my county as an incumbent, declared to me once that he heard a native of my county address a band of workmen thus: "Ha'n't never a one of you chaps seen nothing of no hat?"

Moore accumulated negatives as if they were halfpence. A neighbor to whom he had now and then lent a spade, or a frying-pan, or a fagot, offended him, and they slanged each other heartily over the palings.

Moore wound up the controversy thus: "Don't you never come to my house for nothing no more, for ye won't get it."

The population of Scott's Common is sparse, but the dialogue being both long and loud, seven girls had collected, from four to thirteen years old. With this assembly Moore shared his triumph. "There, you gals, I have sewed up *his* stocking," said George Moore.

Scott's Farm was a small holding surrounded by woods, flat enough when you got up to it, but on very high ground. Not a drop of well-water for miles. The men drank no liquid but beer; the women, tea and tadpoles.

None of the larger tenants would be bothered with "Scott's." But small farmers are poor farmers and unsuccessful. One or two failed on it, and it was vacant. The homestead was a picture to look at, and in the farm-yard a natural cart-shed, perhaps without its fellow, an old oak-tree twenty-seven feet in girth, and of enormous age. The top was gone entirely, so was the inside. Nothing stood but a large hollow stem with three or four vertical chasms, one so broad that a cart could pass into the wooden funnel — yet that shell put out the greenest oak-leaves in all the country-side. An artist could have lived at Scott's Farm and made money. But the acres attached to the delightful residence made it a bad bargain to farmers; for the acres and the low rent tempted the tenants to farm.

Now you must understand that for a long time past Ireland has been telling England a falsehood, and England swallowing it for a self-evident truth, and building rotten legislation on it; viz., that the rent is the principal expense of a farm.

It is not one-fifth the expense of a well-tilled farm; and of an ill-cultivated farm not one-tenth, for it is the last thing paid.

Scott's Farm was one out of a hundred examples I have seen. The rent of seventy-five acres, plus a charming house and homestead, was fifty pounds. Yet one bad farmer after another broke on it, and grumbled at the rent, though it could not have been the rent that hurt him, for he never paid it.

Well, Mr. Moore called on my brother, and offered to rent Scott's Farm.

My brother stared with amazement, then said, dryly, "Did you ever do me an injury?"

"Not as I know on, Squire; nor don't mean to."

"Then why should I do you one? Scott's! Why, they all break on it."

"Oh," said Moore, "folk as ha'n't got no head-piece, nor no money neither, are bound to break on a farm. 'Tain't to say George Moore is a-going to break."

My brother replied, "Oh, I know you are a good judge of live-stock, and I dare say you have picked up a notion of farming; but you see it requires capital."

"Well, Squire," said the shoemaker, "I'm not a thousand-pound man, but I'm a nine-hundred-pound man. I'll show you some on't;" and he actually pulled out of his breeches pocket seven hundred pounds in bank-notes, and presented them as his references. In short, he rented Scott's Farm.

But my brother could never bear anybody who *amused* him to come to grief, and so for a time he was in anxiety lest Moore should lose the money he had acquired by his industry, and kept by his economy. However, the new tenant stocked the farm, which his predecessors had not done, and let fall remarks indicating prosperity, as that a farmer had no business to go to his barn-door for rent, and that *he* could make a living anywhere. Besides, the rising ricks spoke for themselves.

I believe he had been tenant nine months when, one day, my brother, seeing him smoking a pipe over his farm-yard gate, dismounted expressly to talk to him.

Mr. Moore's first sentence betrayed that he was no longer a shoemaker.

"Look 'ee here, Squire, a farmering man wants to have four eyes and three hands; two for work; one is always wanted in his pocket — rent, tithe, labor, taxes, rates. Why, the parish tapped me three times last month. My wife got behind in her washing through wasting of her time counting out the money I had to pay away. As to my men — I be counted sharp, but I must be split in two to be sharp enough for they."

"I was afraid you would find the rent heavy," said my brother, innocently.

"The rent?" cried Mr. Moore; "I don't vally it that!" and he snapped his fingers at it. "But how about the labor — men and horses and women; and the three crops of weeds on one field, through me coming after tipplers and fools as left the land foul for Moore to clean after they. And then" — He paused, and jerking his thumb over his shoulder, added: "THE BLACK SLUG THAT EATS UP THE TENTH OF THE LAND."

My brother did not understand the simile one bit till he followed the direction of Mr. Moore's thumb, and beheld a beneficed clergyman crossing the common like a lamb, all unconscious of the injurious metaphor shot after him by oppressed agriculture.

Having suppressed a grin with some difficulty, my brother said, gravely, "I'll tell ye what it is, Moore; if you went to church a little oftener, you would find out that the clergy are worth their money to those who go by their advice in this world, and so learn not to forget the next. Come, now; our parson has no tithes, and

only a very small stipend, yet I never see you at church. Surely you might go once on a Sunday."

Now I must premise that Mr. A——, justly dissatisfied with the morals of that parish, preached sermons which were in fact philippics.

"Why, Squire," said Moore, "I have tried 'un. But I do take after my horses; I can't stand all whip and no carn."

Undaunted by the comparison, his landlord gravely reminded him that there were prayers as well as a sermon, and prayers full of charity, and fitted to all conditions of life.

"Well, Squire," said the farmer, half apologetically, "I'll tell you the truth; I never was a hog at prayers."

It was a pity he could not add he never was greedy of this world's goods.

One day my brother heard his voice rather loud in the yard, and found him bargaining with a lad in a smock-frock — a stranger.

At sight of the Squire the injured farmer appealed to him. "Look at 'un," said he, "a-standing there." The lad remained impassive as the gate-post under the scrutiny thus dramatically invited. "A wants ten shilling a week, and three pound Michaelmas." Then, turning from my brother to the lad, "Now, what did you have at your last place — without a lie?"

"Six shillings, and a pound at Michaelmas," said the young fellow, calmly.

"And you thinks to rise me ten shillings! Now, tell 'ee what it is, young man, you hire yourself to keep the mildew out o' my wheat, and the rot out o' my sheep, or else draa no wages out o' me. You make me safe as my horses sha'n't go broken-winded, nor blind, nor lame, while you be driving on 'em, nor my cows sha'n't slip their calves, nor my sows sha'n't lay over their litters

and smother 'em. I maunt have no fly in my turmots under you, my barley and wuts must come to the rick nice and dry and bright, and then I'll pay you half a sovereign a week." With sudden friendliness — "Where did 'ee come from ? "

"Cholsey village."

"However did 'ee find your way all up here ? "

The lad said it was only six miles ; he had found his way easy enough.

"Then you'll find it easier back. Good-morning."

And off he went. The lad put his hands in his breeches pockets and strolled away unmoved in another direction ; and my brother retired swiftly to take down every syllable of this inimitable dialogue. It afterward appeared that his was the only genuine exit ; the other two were examples of what the French dramatists call *fausse sortie.* For the very next day this Cholsey lad was at work for Mr. Moore.

"Halloo ! " said my brother. "Why, you parted never to meet again — far as the poles asunder. Ha, ha ! "

"Oh, that is how we *begins !* " explained Moore, with a grin. "Bought him at my own price. But (with sudden gloom) a *wool* have two pounds Michaelmas, the risolute to-a-d."

Moore had a cur his wife implored him to hang out of her way. "Well," said he, "anything for a quiet life. You find the card ; I'll find the labor."

Ere a cord was found, Moore caught sight of the good, easy Squire ; he came out and told him Toby had been poaching on his own account, and had better be tied up except when wanted. Offered him for three half-crowns, praised him up to the skies.

Squire Easy submitted to the infliction, and Toby was sent to the kennel.

Next week Moore had made a bad bargain. "I let 'ee have Toby too cheap; I hear of all sides as he's the best rabbiter you ha' got, a regular hexpeditious good dog."

He gave his landlord a piece of advice, which, to tell the truth, that gentleman needed sorely; for he was never known to make one good bargain in all his life. Said Mr. Moore, "Don't you never listen to a chap as won't say aforehand how much he'll give or take to a farthing, or a halfpenny at the *very* outside. When that there humbug says to you, 'Oh, we sha'n't quar rel,' says you, 'I'll take care of that, for down you puts it to a farthing.' When he says, 'Oh, I'll not hurt you,' says you, 'Oh yes, ye will, if I give you a chance; put it down to a farthing, or I'm off.'"

He let his parlor and a bedroom to a lodger for fifteen shillings a week, a sum unheard of in those parts.

This transpired in a few months, and my brother congratulated him.

Here is his reply, *ad verbum:* —

"Why, Squire, it doesn't all stick to me. There's my missus, she is took off her work to attend to he. Then there's a gre-at hearty gal I'm fossed to hire. There goes eighteenpence a week and her vittels. I tried to get a sickly one as wouldn't eat my head off, but there warn't a sickly one as 'ud come. Feared of a little work! Now (with sudden severity) do I get half a guinea out of he?" Then with a shout, "No!" Then with the sudden calmness of unalterable conviction, "Not by sixpence."

This seems a tough man, not to be easily moved, a wary man, not to be outwitted; yet misfortune befell him, and rankled for years.

My brother left Oxfordshire and settled in a milder climate. During his long sojourn there, a vague report

reached him that bad money had been passed on Moore, and he had made the district ring.

When after seven years my brother returned to his native woods, he looked in at Scott's Farm, and there was Moore, the only familiar face about which did not seem a day older. After other friendly iuquiries my brother said, —

"But how about the bad money that was passed on you? Tell me all about it."

"That I wool," said Moore, delighted to find a good listener to a grievance which to him was ever new though the circumstance was five years old. "I was at dung-cart most of that day, and then I washed, and tried to get a minute to milk the cow; but bless your heart, they never will let me milk her afore sunset. It's Moore here and Moore there, from half a dozen of 'em; and Mr. Moore here, and Mr. Moore there, from the one or two as have learned manners, which very few of 'em have in these parts; and between 'em they allus contrive to keep me from my own cow till dusk. Well, sir, I had got leave to milk her, hurry-scurry as usual, and night coming on, when a man I had sold a fat hog to came into the yard to pay. 'Wait a minute,' says I. But no, he was like the rest, couldn't let me milk her in peace; wanted to settle and drive the baacon home. So I took my head out o' the cow, and I went to him without so much as letting my smock down, and he gave me the money, six pounds seventeen shillings. I took the gold in one hand so, and the silver in t'other so, and I went across the yard to the house, and I asked the missus to get a light, and then I told the money before her, six sovereigns and seventeen shillings, and left her to scratch him a receipt, while I went back to my cow, and I thought to milk her in peace at last. But before I had drained her as should be, out comes my missus,

and screams fit to wake the dead, 'George! George!' —'I be coming,' says I; so I up with the milk-pail and goes to her. 'Whose cat's dead now?' says I, 'for mercy's sake!'

"'Come in, come in,' says she. 'George, whoever is that man? He have paid us a bad shilling; look at that.' Well, we tried that there shilling on the table first, and then on the hearth: 'twas bad; couldn't be wus. 'Run after him,' says she; 'run this moment.' 'Lard,' says I, 'they be half way to Wallingford by this time. Here, give me a scrap of paper. I'll carry it about in my fob; he goes to all the markets; he will change it, you may be sure.'

"Well, the very next Friday as ever was I met him at Wallingford market, pulls out the paper, shows him the shilling, tells him it warn't good. He looks at it and agreed with me. 'Then change it, if you please,' says I. 'What for?' says he. 'I don't want no bad shillings no more nor you do.'—'But,' says I, 'price of hog was six seventeen, and you only paid six sixteen in money.'—'Yes, I did,' says he. 'I gave you six seventeen.'—'No, ye didn't.'—'Yes, I did.'—'No, ye didn't; you gave me six sixteen and *this*. Now, my man,' says I, 'act honest and pay me t'other shilling.' No, he wouldn't. There was a crowd by this time, so I said, 'Look here, gentlemen, I sold this man a hog, and he gave me this in part pay, which it ain't a *real* shilling, and mine was a genuine hog;' so they all said it warn't a shilling at all. When the man heard that he was for slipping off, but I stepped after him with half the market at my heels. 'Will you pay me my shilling?'—'I don't owe you no shilling,' says he. 'You do,' says I; 'and pay me my shilling you shall.'—'I won't.'—'You shall; I'll pison your life else.'

"Next time of asking, as the saying is, was Reading

market. Catches him cheapening a calf. Takes out shilling. 'Now,' says I, 'here's your bad shilling as you gave me for my hog — which it is a warning to honest folk with calves to sell,' says I. 'Be you going to change it?' — 'No, I bain't.' — 'You bain't?' says I. 'You shall, then,' says I. 'Time will show,' says he, and bid me good-day, ironical. I let him get a little away, and then I stepped after him. 'Hy, stop that gentleman,' I hallooed. 'He have given me a bad shilling.' You might hear me all over the market. Then he threatened defanation or summat; I didn't keer; I bawled him out o' Reading market that there afternoon.

"Met him at Henley next; commenced operations — took out the shilling. He crossed over directly, I after 'un and held out the shilling. ''Tain't no use,' says I. 'You sha'n't do no business in this here county till you have changed this here shilling. Come, my man, 'tis only a shilling; what is all this here to-do about a shilling?' says I; 'act honest and give me my shilling, and take this here *keepsake* back.' — 'I won't,' says he. 'You won't?' says I; 'then I'll hunt you out of every market in England. I'll hunt ye into the wilderness and the hocean wave.'

"He got very sick of me in a year or two's marketing, I can tell you; for I never missed a market *now*, because of the shilling. He had to give up trade and go home whenever he saw my shilling and me a-coming."

"And so you tired him out?"

"That I did."

"And got your shilling?"

"That I did not. He found a way to cheat me, after all (with a sudden yell of reprobation). He went and died — and here's the shilling."

BORN TO GOOD-LUCK.

I.

Patrick O'Rafferty was a small farmer in the County Leinster. He and his father before him had been yearly tenants to Squire Ormsby for fifty years on very easy terms.

Patrick, more uneasy than his sire, now and then pestered this Squire for a lease. Then the Squire used to say, "Well, if you make a point of it, I will have the land valued, and a lease drawn accordingly." But this iniquitous proposal always shut O'Rafferty's mouth for a time. He was called in the village Paddy Luck; and certainly he had the luck to get into a good many fights and other scrapes, and to get out of them wonderfully. It was he who set the name rolling; his neighbors did but accept it.

He professed certain powers akin to divination, and they were not generally ridiculed, for he was right one time in five, and that was enough, for credulity always forgets the usual and remembers the eccentric.

This worthy had a cow to sell, and drove her in to the nearest fair. He put twelve pounds on her and was laughed at. She was dry and she was ugly. "Twelve pounds! Go along wid ye." — "Never mind *her*," was Pat's reply. "I'm Paddy Luck, and it's meself that will

sell the baste for twelve pounds, and divil a ha'penny less." This was his proclamation all the morning. In the afternoon he condescended to ten pounds, just to oblige the community. At sunset he managed to get eight pounds, and a bystander told him he was a lucky fellow.

"That is no news, thin," said he. It was dark, and he was tired; his home was twelve Irish miles off; he resolved to sleep in the town. In the mean time he went to a tavern and regaled his purchaser, drank, danced, daffed, showed his money, got drunk, and was robbed by one of the light-fingered gentry who prowl about a fair.

The consequence was that the next time he ordered liquor on a liberal scale — for he was one who treated semicircularly in his cups — he could not find a shilling to pay, and the landlord put him out into the street. He cooled himself at a neighboring pump, and went in search of gratuitous lodgings. The hard-hearted town did not provide these, so he walked out of it into sweeter air. He was not sick nor sorry. Quite the reverse. He congratulated himself on his good-luck. "Sure, now," said he, "if I had sold her for twelve pounds, it's four pounds I'd be losing by that same bargain."

Some little distance outside the town he found a deserted hovel; there was no door, window, nor floor; but the roof was free from holes in one or two places, and there was a dry corner and a heap of straw in it. Paddy thanked his stars for providing him with so complete and gratuitous a shelter, and immediately burrowed into the straw, and was about to drop asleep when the glimmer of a lantern shot in through the doorway, and voices muttered outside.

Patrick nestled deeper in the straw; he was a trespasser, and it seemed too late and yet too early for the virtues, charity included, to be afoot.

Two men came in with a sack, a spade, and a lantern; one of them lifted the lanterns up and took a cursory glance round the premises. Patrick, whom the spade had set a-shivering, held his breath. Then the man put the lantern down, and his companion went to work and dug, not a grave, as panting Pat expected, but a big round hole.

This done, they emptied the sack; out rolled and tinkled silver salvers of all sizes, coffee-pots, teapots, forks, spoons, brooches, necklaces, rings — a mine of wealth, that glowed and glittered in the light of the lantern.

Patrick began to perspire as well as tremble. The men filled in the hole, stamped the earth firmly down, and then lighted their pipes and held a consultation. The question was how to dispose of these valuables. After some differences of opinion, they agreed that one Barney was the fence they would invite to the spot, and if he would not give one hundred pounds for the spoil, they would take it to Dublin. It transpired that Barney lived at some distance, but not too far to come to-morrow evening and inspect the booty. Then, if he would spring to their price, they would go home with him and receive the coin.

"My luck!" thought Patrick. "What need had they to light their pipes and chatter like two old women about such a trifle, without searching the straw first, the omadhauns!" The thieves retired, and lucky Pat went quietly to sleep.

He awoke in broad daylight, and strolled back into the town. He walked jauntily, for, if he had no money, he possessed a secret. He was too Irish and too sly to go to the police-office at once; his little game was to try and find out who had been robbed, and what reward they would give.

Meantime, he had to breakfast off a stale roll given him by a baker out of charity. About noon he passed through a principal street, and lo! in a silversmith's shop was a notice, written very large: —

"THIRTY GUINEAS REWARD!

"Whereas these premises were broken into last night, and the following valuable property abstracted:" —

Then followed an inventory a foot long.

"The above reward will be paid to any person who will give such information as may lead to the conviction of the thieves and the recovery of the stolen goods, or any considerable part thereof."

Patrick walked in and asked to see the proprietor. A little fussy man in a great state of agitation responded to that query.

"Are you in 'arnest now, sorr?" asked Pat.

"In earnest! Of course I am."

"What if a dacent poor boy like me was to find you the silver and thieves and all?"

"I'd give you the thirty guineas, and my blessing into the bargain."

"Maybe ye wouldn't like to give me my dinner an' all, by raison I'm just famishing with hunger?"

This proposal raised suspicion, and the proprietor asked his name.

"Patrick O'Rafferty. I'm tenant to Squire Ormsby."

"I know *him*. Well, Patrick, I suppose you can give me some information. I'll risk the dinner, any way."

"Ah, well, sorr," said Patrick, "they say 'fling a sprat to catch a whale.' A rump-steak and a quart of ale is a favorite repast of mine; when I have had 'em I'll 'arn 'em, by the holy poker!"

"Step into my back parlor, Mr. Rafferty," said the silversmith.

He then sent for the rump-steak very loud, and for a policeman in a whisper.

The steak came first, and was most welcome. When he had eaten it, the modest O'Rafferty asked for a pipe and pot.

While he smoked and sipped calmly the disguised policeman arrived, and was asked to examine him through a little window.

"Does he look like crime?" whispered the silversmith.

"No," said the policeman. "Calf-like innocence and impudence galore."

The jeweller asked O'Rafferty to step out. "Now, sir," said he, "you have had your dinner, and I don't grudge it you; but if this is a jest, let it end here, for I am in sore trouble, and it would be a heartless thing to play on me."

"Och, hear to him!" cried Patrick, with a whine as doleful as sudden. "Did iver an O'Rafferty make a jist of an honest man's trouble, or ate a male off his losses? But what is a hungry man worth? I could not see how to do your work while I was famished; but now my belly is full, and my head fuller, glory be to God!"

"I don't know how it is," said the jeweller, aside to the detective, "he tells me nothing, and yet somehow he gives me confidence. But, Mr. O'Rafferty, do consider — time flies, and I am no nearer my stolen goods. What is the first step we are to take?"

"The first step was to fill my belly; the next step is to find me — och, murther, it is a rarity!"

"Never mind," said the disguised officer. "Find you what?"

"A policeman — that isn't a fool."

II.

This was a stinger, and so sudden, his hearers looked rather sheepish at him. It was the policeman who answered.

"If you will come to the station, I will undertake to find you that."

Patrick assented, and on the way they made friends; his companion revealed himself, and forgave the stinger; and Patrick, pleased with his good-temper, let him into the plan he had matured while smoking his pipe and appearing to lose time. All Patrick stipulated was that he himself should be the person in command; and as he alone knew where the booty was, and was manifestly as crafty as a badger, this was cheerfully acceded to. So, an hour before dusk, four fellows that looked like countrymen drove a cart full of straw up to the hovel, and made a big heap by adding it to what was there already.

Then two drove the cart back to the edge of the town, and put the horse up, and rejoined their companions in ambush, all but one, and he hid in a dry ditch opposite. They were all armed, and the outside watcher had a novel weapon — a powerful blue light in the shape of a fat squib.

It is a dreary business waiting at night for criminals who may never come at all, or, if they do, may be desperate, and fight like madmen, or wild-cats.

Eight o'clock came — nine — ten — eleven — twelve; the watchers were chilled and stiff, and Patrick sleepy.

One of the policemen whispered to him, "They won't come to-night. Are you sure they have not been and taken up the swag?"

"Not sure; but I think not." The policeman growled and muttered something about a mare's-nest.

"Hush!" said another.

"What?" in an agitated whisper.

"Wheels!"

Silence.

They all remained as still as death. The faint wheels, that would have been inaudible by day, rattled nearer and nearer. It was late for a *bona fide* traveller to be on the road. Would the wheels pass the hovel?

They came up fast; then they stopped suddenly. To the watchers everything was audible, and every sound magnified. When the drag stopped it was like a railway train pulling up. Men leaped out, and seemed to shake the ground. When three figures bustled into the hovel it sounded like a rush of men. Then came a thrilling question: Would the thieves examine the premises before they looked for the booty? The chances were they would.

Well, they did not. They were in great anxiety, too, but it took the form of hurry. They dug furiously, displayed the booty to Barney all in a hurry, and demanded their price.

"Now, then, one hundred pounds, or take your last look at 'em."

"One hundred pounds!" whined Barney. "Can't be done."

"Very well; there's no time to bargain."

"I'll give eighty pounds. But I shall lose money by 'em."

"Blarney! they are worth a thousand. Here, Jem, put 'em up; we can do better in Dublin."

Barney whined and remonstrated, but ended by consenting to give the price.

The words were hardly out of his mouth, when the hovel gleamed with a lurid fire, so vivid and penetrating

that every crevice of it and the very cobwebs came out distinct.

The thieves yelled with dismay, and one ran away from the light, slap into the danger, and was dazzled again with opening bulls'-eyes, and captured like a lamb. The other rushed blindfold at the entrance, but his temple encountered a cold pistol, and a policeman immovable as a statue. He recoiled, and was in that moment of hesitation pinned from behind and handcuffed — click! As for Barney, from whom no fight was expected, he was allowed to clamber up the walls, like a mouse in a trap, then tumble down, until the four-wheel they had come in was brought up by Paddy O'Rafferty. Then the thieves were bundled in, and sat each of them between two honest men, and the fence was attached by the wrist to a policeman, who walked him to the same destination; but, like friend Virgil's bull, *multa reluctantem*, hanging back in vain, and in vain bribing the silent, impenetrable Bobby.

Pat slept at the station, and next morning the jeweller gave his thirty guineas with a good heart, but omitted the blessing. Patrick whined dismally at this very serious omission, and the worthy little fellow gave it him with glistening eyes; "For," said he, "I'll own now the loss would have ruined me. I find by my books they cost me thirteen hundred pounds." So then he blessed him solemnly, and Pat went home rejoicing. "I'll have more luck than ever now," said he. "I'll have all sorts of luck now — good, bad, and indifferent."

When he got home he told the story inaccurately and like a monomaniac; that is to say, he suppressed all the fortitude and sagacity he had shown. These were qualities he possessed, so he thought nothing of them.

Luck and divination were what he prided himself on. His version ran thus: he had the luck not to sell his cow till nightfall, the still better luck to be robbed of his

money, and compelled to sleep in the neighborhood. Then, thanks to his superlative luck, the Queen's jeweller had been robbed of silver salvers the size of the harvest moon, two-gallon teapots, pearls like hazel-nuts, and diamonds as big as broad beans; and seeing no other way to recover them, and hearing that the wise man of Gannachee was in the town, had given him a good dinner and his pipe, and begged him to use all his powers as a seer; of all which the upshot was that he had put the police on the right track, and recovered the booty, and caged the thieves, and marched home with the reward.

In telling this romance, he was careful to take out the thirty sovereigns, and jingle them, and this musical appeal to the senses so overpowered the understandings of his neighbors that they swallowed the wondrous tale like spring water.

After this few were bold enough to resist his pretensions to luck and divination. He was often consulted, especially about missing property, and as he now and then guessed right, and sometimes had taken the precaution to hide the property himself, which materially increased his chances of finding it, he passed for a seer.

One fine day Squire Ormsby learned to his dismay that his pantry had been broken into and a mass of valuable plate taken. Mr. Ormsby was much distressed, not only on account of the value, but the length of time certain pieces had been in his family. He distrusted the police and publicity in these cases, and his wife prevailed on him to send for Patrick O'Rafferty.

That worthy came, and heard the story. He looked at the lady and gentleman, and his self-deception began to ooze out of him. To humbug his humble neighbors was not difficult nor dangerous, but to deceive and then undeceive and disappoint his landlord was quite another matter.

He put on humility, and said this was a matter beyond him entirely. Then the Squire was angry, and said, bitterly, "No doubt he would rather oblige his neighbors, or a shopkeeper who was a stranger to him, than the man whose land had fed him and his for fifty years." He was proceeding in the same strain when poor Pat, with that dismal whine the merry soul was subject to occasionally, implored him not to murder him entirely with hard words; he would do his best.

"No man can do more," said Mr. Ormsby. "Now, how will you proceed? Can we render you any assistance?"

Patrick said, humbly and in a downcast way, he would like to see the place where the thieves got in.

He was taken to the pantry-window, and examined it inside and out, and all the servants peeped at him.

"What next?" asked the Squire.

Then Patrick inwardly resolved to get a good dinner out of this business, however humiliating the end of it might be. "Sorr," said he, "ye'll have to give me a room all to meself, and a rump-steak and onions; and after that your servants must bring me three pipes and three pints of home-brewed ale. Brewers' ale hasn't the same spiritual effect on a seer's mind."

The order was given, and set the kitchen on fire with curiosity. Some disbelieved his powers, but more believed them, and cited the jeweller's business and other examples.

When the first pipe and pint were to go to him a discussion took place between the magnates of the kitchen who should take it up. At last the butler and the housekeeper insisted on the footman taking it. Accordingly he did so.

Meantime, Patrick sat in state digesting the good food. He began to feel a physical complacency and to defy the future; he only regretted that he had confined his demand

to one dinner and three pots. To him in this frame of mind entered the footman with pipe and pint of ale as clear as Madeira.

Says Patrick, looking at the pipe, "This is the first of 'em."

The footman put the things down rather hurriedly and vanished.

"Humph," said Pat to himself, "*you* don't seem to care for my company."

He sipped and smoked, and his mind worked.

The footman went to the butler with a scared face, and said, "I won't go near him again; he said I was one."

"Nonsense!" said the butler: "I'll take up the next."

He did so. Patrick gazed in his face, took the pipe, and said, *sotto voce*, —

"This is the second;" then, very regretfully, "Only one more to come."

The butler went away much discomposed, and told the housekeeper.

"I can't believe it," said she. "Anyway, I'll know the worst."

So in due course she took up the third pipe and pint, and wore propitiatory smiles.

"This is the last of 'em," said Patrick, solemnly, and looked at the glass.

The housekeeper went down all in a flutter. "We are found out, we are ruined," said she. "There is nothing to be done now but — Yes, there is; we must buy him, or put the comether on him before he sees the master."

Patrick was half dozing over his last pipe when he heard a rustle and a commotion, and lo! three culprits on their knees to him. With that instinctive sagacity which was his one real gift — so he underrated it — he said, with a twinkling eye, —

"Och, thin, you've come to make a clane brist of it, the three Chrischin vartues and haythen graces that ye are. Ye may save yourselves the throuble. Sure, I know all about it."

"We see you do. Y'are wiser than Solomon," said the housekeeper. "But sure ye wouldn't abuse your wisdom to ruin three poor bodies like us?"

"Poor!" cried Patrick. "Is it poor ye call yourselves? Ye ate and drink like fighting cocks; y'are clothed in silk, and plush, and broadcloth, and your wages is all pocket-money and pin-money. Yet ye must rob the man that feeds and clothes ye."

"It is true! it is true!" cried the butler.

"He spakes like a priest," said the woman.

"Oh, alanna! don't be hard on us; it is all the devil's doings; he timpted us. Oh! oh! oh!"

"Whisht, now, and spake sinse," said Patrick, roughly. "Is it melted?"

"It is not."

"Can you lay your hands on it?"

"We can, every stiver of it. We intended to put it back."

"*That's* a lie," said Patrick, firmly, but not in the least reproachfully. "Now look at me, the whole clan of ye, male and faymale. Which would you rather do —help me find the gimcracks, every article of 'em, or be lagged, and scragged, and stretched on a gibbet, and such like iligant divarsions?"

They snatched eagerly at the plank of safety held out to them, and from that minute acted under Mr. O'Rafferty's orders.

"Fetch me another pint," was his first behest.

"Ay, a dozen, if ye'll do us the honor to drink it."

"To the divil wid your blarney! Now tell the master I'm at his sarvice."

"Oh, murder! what will become of us? Would you tell him, after all?"

"Ye omadhauns! can't ye listen at the dure, and hear what I tell him?"

With this understanding, Squire Ormsby was ushered in, all expectation.

"Yer honor," said Patrick, "I think the power is laving me. I am only able to see the half of it. Now, if you plaze, would you like to catch the thieves and lose the silver, or to find the silver and not find the thieves?"

"Why, the silver, to be sure."

"Then you and my lady must go to mass to-morrow morning, and when you come back we will look for the silver; and maybe, if we find it, your honor will give me that little bit of a lease."

"One thing at a time, Pat; you haven't found the silver yet."

At nine o'clock next morning, Mr. and Mrs. Ormsby returned from mass, and found O'Rafferty waiting for them at their door. He had a long walking-stick with a shining knob, and informed them, very solemnly, that the priest had sprinkled it for him with holy water.

Thus armed, he commenced the search. He penetrated into out-houses, and applied his stick to chimneys, and fagots, and cold ovens, and all possible places. No luck.

Then he proceeded to the stable-yard, and searched every corner; then into the shrubbery; then into the tool-house. No luck. Then on to the lawn. By this time there were about thirty at his heels.

Disgusted at this fruitless search, Patrick apostrophized his stick: "Bad cess to you, y'are only good to burn. Ye kape turning away from every place; but ye don't turn to anything whatever. Stop a bit! Oh, holy Moses! what is this?"

As he spoke, the stick seemed to rise and point like a gun. Patrick marched in the direction indicated, and after awhile seemed to be forced by the stick into a run. He began to shout excitedly, and they all ran after him. He ran full tilt against a dismounted water-barrel, and the end of the stick struck it with such impetus that it knocked the barrel over, then flew out of Patrick's hand to the right, who himself made a spring the other way, and stood glaring with all the rest at the glittering objects that strewed the lawn, neither more nor less than the missing plate.

Shouts and screams of delight. Everybody shaking hands with Patrick, who, being a consummate actor, seemed dazzled and mystified, as one who had succeeded far beyond his expectations.

To make a long story short, they all settled it in their minds that the thieves had been alarmed, and hidden the plate for a time, intending to return and fetch it away.

Mr. Ormsby took the seer into his study, and gave him a piece of paper, stating that for a great service rendered to him by Patrick O'Rafferty, he had, in the name of him and his, promised him undisturbed possession of the farm, so long as he or his should farm it themselves, and pay the present rent.

Pat's modesty vanished at the Squire's gate; he bragged up and down the village, and henceforth nobody disputed his seership in those parts.

But one day the Sassenach came down with his cold incredulity.

A neighbor's estate, mortgaged up to the eyes, was sold under the hammer, and Sir Henry Steele bought it, and laid some of it down in grass. He was a breeder of stock. He marked out a park wall, and did not include a certain little orchard and a triangular plot. The seer observed, and applied for them. Sir Henry, who did his

own business, received the application, noted it down, and asked him for a reference. He gave Squire Ormsby.

"I will make inquiries," said Sir Henry. "Good-morning."

He knew Ormsby in London; and when he became his neighbor, the Irish gentleman was all hospitality. One day, Sir Henry told him of O'Rafferty's application, and asked about him.

"Oh," said Ormsby, "that is our seer."

"Your what?"

"Our wise man, our diviner of secrets; and some wonderful things he has done."

He then related the loss of his plate, and its supernatural recovery.

The Sassenach listened with a cold, incredulous eye, and a sardonic grin.

Then the Irishman got hot, and accumulated examples.

Then the Sassenach, with the obstinacy of his race, said he would put these pretensions to the test. He had picked out of the various narratives that this seer was very fond of a good dinner, and pretended it tended to enlighten his mind; so he laid his trap accordingly.

At his request Patrick was informed that next Tuesday, at one o'clock, if he chose to submit to a fair test of his divining powers, the parcel of land he had asked for should be let him on easy terms.

Patrick assented jauntily. But in his secret soul he felt uneasy at having to encounter this Sassenach gentleman. Sir Henry was the fortunate possessor of what Pat was pleased to call "a nasty, glittering eye," and over that eye Pat doubted his ability to draw the wool as he had done over Celtic orbs.

However, he came up to the scratch like a man. After all, he had nothing to lose this time, and he vowed to submit to no test that was not preceded by a good dinner.

He was ushered into Sir Henry Steele's study, and there he found that gentleman and Mr. Ormsby. One comfort, there was a cloth laid, and certain silver dishes on the hobs and in the fender.

"Well, Mr. O'Rafferty," said his host, "I believe you like a good dinner?"

"Thrue for you, sorr," said Pat.

"Well, then, we can combine business with pleasure; you shall have a good dinner."

"Long life to your honor!"

"I cooked it for you myself."

"God bless your honor for your condescinsion."

"You are to eat the dinner first, and then just tell me what the meat is, and the parcel of land is yours on easy terms."

Patrick's confidence rose. "Sure, thin, it is a fair bargain," said he.

The dishes were uncovered. There were vegetables cooked most deliciously; the meat was a *chef-d'œuvre;* a sort of rich ragout done to a turn, and so fragrant that the very odor made the mouth water.

Patrick seated himself, helped himself, and took a mouthful; that mouthful had a double effect. He realized in one and the same moment that this was a more heavenly compound than he had ever expected to taste upon earth, and that he could not and never should divine what bird or beast he was eating. He looked for the bones; there were none. He yielded himself to desperate enjoyment. When he had nearly cleaned the plate he said that even the best-cooked meat was not the worse for a quart of good ale to wash it down.

Sir Henry Steele rang a bell and ordered a quart of ale.

Patrick enjoyed this, too, and did not hurry; he felt it was his last dinner in that house, as well as his first.

The gentlemen watched him and gave him time. But at last Ormsby said, "Well, Patrick?"

Now, Patrick, while he sipped, had been asking himself what line he had better take; and he had come to a conclusion creditable to that sagacity and knowledge of human nature he really possessed, and underrated accordingly. He would compliment the gentlemen on their superior wisdom, and own he could not throw dust in such eyes as theirs; then he would beg them not to make his humble neighbors as wise as they were, but let him still pass for a wise man in the parish, while *they* laughed in their superior sleeves. To carry out this he impregnated his brazen features with a world of comic humility.

And said he, in cajoling accents, "Ah, your honors, the old fox made many a turn, but the dogs were too many for him at last."

What more of self-depreciation and cajolery he would have added is not known, for Sir Henry Steele broke in loudly, "Good heavens! Well, he *is* an extraordinary man. It *was* an old dog-fox I cooked for him."

"Didn't I tell you?" cried Ormsby, delighted at the success of his countryman.

"Well, sir," said Sir Henry, whose emotions seldom lasted long, "a bargain's a bargain. I let you the orchard and field for — let me see — you must bring me a stoat, a weasel, and a polecat every year. I mean to get up the game."

Mr. O'Rafferty first stared stupidly, then winked cunningly, then blandly absorbed laudation and land; then retired invoking solemn blessings; then, being outside, executed a fandango, and went home on wings; from that hour the village could not hold him. His speech was of accumulating farms at peppercorn rents, till a slice of the county should be his. To hear him, he could see through a deal-board, and luck was his monopoly.

He began to be envied, and was on the way to be hated, when, confiding in his star, he married Norah Blake, a beautiful girl, but a most notorious vixen.

Then the unlucky ones forgave him a great deal: for sure, wouldn't Norah revenge them? Alas! the traitress fell in love with her husband after marriage, and let him mould her into a sort of angelic duck.

This was the climax. So Paddy Luck is now numbered among the lasting institutions of ould Ireland (if any).

May he live till the skirts of his coat knock his brains out, and him dancing an Irish fling to "the wind that shakes the barley!"

THERE'S MANY A SLIP 'TWIXT THE CUP AND THE LIP.

CHAPTER I.

Mr. Samuel Sutton, wool-stapler, had a large business in Frome, inherited from his father, and enlarged by himself; also a nest-egg of a hundred and fifty thousand pounds invested at four per cent in solid securities. He lived clear out of the town in a large house built by himself, and called Merino Lodge, with lawn, gardens, conservatories, stables, all of them models. He loved business, and spent his day in the office; he loved his wife, and enjoyed his evenings at home. But this life of calm content was broken up in one month; his wife sickened and died, leaving him utterly desolate and wretched. No child to reflect her beloved features, and no live thing to cherish but her favorite dog, an orphan girl she had taken into the house eight years before, and the immortal memory of a watchful and unselfish affection.

Under this stunning blow messages of consolation poured in upon him, many of them delicately and admirably worded, all written with a certain sympathy, but with dry eyes. His very servants spoke with bated breath and sorrowful looks before him, but he heard the squawks of the women and the guffaws of the men out

in the yard. Only one creature beside himself suffered. It was his wife's *protégée*, Rebecca Barnes. For many a day this girl, like himself, never smiled, and often burst into tears all in a moment over her work. This was not lost on the mourner; hitherto he had hardly noticed this humble figure; but now he looked at her with interest, and told her, once for all, he would be a friend to her, as his beloved wife had been.

The young woman, thus distinguished, was attractive: she was tall and straight, but not bony, nor nipped in at the waist. She had the face of an English rural beauty: light brown hair, a very white skin, dark gray eyes, and a complexion not divided into red and white, but with a light brick-dusty color, very sweet and healthy, diffused all over two oval cheeks; a large but shapely mouth and beautiful teeth made her winning; a little cocked-up nose spoiled her for a beauty; and she might be summed up as comely in person.

Educated by a lady with great good-sense, she could read aloud fluently and with propriety, could write like a clerk, cook well, make pickles and preserves, sweep, dust, cut and sew dresses, iron and get up lace and linen; but could not play the piano nor dance a polka.

Mrs. Sutton always intended her to be housekeeper; and the widower now told her to try and qualify herself in time; she was too young at present.

Months rolled on, but Samuel Sutton's loneliness did not abate. He had only one relation who interested him; Joe Newton, son of a deceased sister, a bold Eton boy he had often tipped. Joe was now at Oxford, and Mr. Sutton invited him for the long vacation, and prepared to like him.

While he is on the road, let us attempt his character —at that period: a goodish scholar, excellent athlete; rowed six in the college boat, and was promised a place

in the University Eleven for fair defence, hard hitting, and exceptional throwing.

He used to back himself against both the universities to fling the hammer and construe Demosthenes; the college tutor heard and remonstrated. "It was not the thing at Oxford to brag; why, Stilwell made a hundred and fifteen against Surrey the other day, but he only said he had been very *lucky*. That is the form at present," said the excellent tutor, stroke of the university boat in his day. Joe explained largely. Of course he knew there were two men who could beat him at throwing the hammer, one Oxford, one Cambridge, and a lot who could eclipse him at construing Greek orators. "But you see, sir," said he, slyly, "the fellows that can construe Demosthenes can't fling the hammer; and the happy pair that can take the shine out of me at the hammer can't construe Demosthenes. I can do both after a fashion."

"Oh," said the tutor, "that alters the case. So it was only an enigma; sounded like a brag."

Add to the virtues indicated above, pugilism, wrestling, good spirits, six feet, broad shoulders, abundance of physical, and a want of moral, courage, and behold Joe Newton, aged twenty-one.

He came to Merino Lodge, and filled the place with sudden vitality. He rowed everybody on the lake; armed both sexes with fishing-rods; mowed and rolled a paddock into a cricket-ground, organized matches between county clubs; drew on his uncle for copious luncheons, chaffed, talked, and enlivened all the family and neighborhood, and gazed at Rebecca Barnes till he troubled her peace, and set her heart in a flutter.

One fine summer evening there was a harvest-home supper, and the rustics drank the farmer's cider without stint. Returning from this banquet, a colossal carter

met Rebecca Barnes and proceeded to some very rough courtship. She gave him the slip and ran and screamed a little. It was near the cricket-ground that Joe was rolling for a match to come off. He heard the signals of distress, and vaulted over the gate in front of Rebecca, just as the carter caught her, and she screamed violently.

"Come, drop that, my man," said Joe, good-humoredly enough.

"Who be you?" inquired the rustic, disdainfully, and challenged him to fight.

"No, don't, sir, pray don't," cried Rebecca. "He is bigger than you, and he thrashes them all."

Joseph hesitated out of good-nature. The bully called him a coward, and took off his coat. Joseph said, apologetically, —

"He wants a lesson. I won't detain you a minute. Now, then, sir, let us get it over." And without taking off his coat, put himself in his favorite attitude. The carter made a rush, got it right and left as if from heaven, and stood staring with two black eyes; came on again more cautiously, but, while endeavoring a tremendous rounder that would probably have finished the business his way, received a dazzler with the left followed by a heavy right-hander on the throat that felled him like a tree.

Joe then gave his arm to Rebecca, who was trembling all over. She took it with both hands, and an inclination to droop her head on his shoulder, which made the walk home slow, amusing, and delightful to Joe.

After that evening, Rebecca, who was already on the verge of danger, began to be divinely happy and unreasonably depressed by turns. She was always peeping at Joe, and coming near him, and avoiding him; and then he took to spooning upon her, and she was coy, but fluttered with wild hopes, and thrilled with innocent joys.

At last energetic Joe spooned on her so openly that Mr. Sutton observed.

He made short work with both culprits.

"Rebecca," said he, "be good enough to keep that young fool at a distance. Joe, let that girl alone. She is only a servant, after all, and I will not have her head turned."

Rebecca blushed and cried and tried to obey.

Joe affected compliance, got impatient, and one day watched for Rebecca, caught her away from home, declared his love for her, and urged her to run away with him.

The instinct of virtue supplied the place of experience, and she rejected him with indignation, and after that kept out of his way in earnest.

However, before he left he owned his fault, begged her pardon, and asked her to wait for him till he got his family living, and was independent of everybody.

This was another matter, and female love soon forgives mild audacity. Reckless Joe overcame her reasonable misgivings, and fed her passion by letters for three whole years, and she refused young Farmer Mortlock, an excellent match in every way.

By and by Joe's letters cooled and became rare. He even declined his uncle's invitations on pretence of reading with a tutor in Wales.

Then Rebecca paled and pined, and divined that she was abandoned. Soon cruel suspense gave way to certainty. Joe was ordained priest, took the family living, and married Melusina Florence Tiverton, a young lady of fashion, high connections, and eight thousand pounds, which, before the marriage, was settled on her and her children.

Mr. Sutton announced this to his friends with satisfaction, and he even told it to Rebecca Barnes, whom he

happened to find at a passage window sewing buttons on his shirts. He was fond of Joe, and thought his good marriage ought to please everybody, and so he was in a good humor, and told Rebecca all about it, and that he had promised the happy pair a thousand pounds to start with.

Rebecca turned cold as a stone, and kept on sewing, but slower and slower every stitch.

"Well, you might wish them joy," said Mr. Sutton.

"I wish — them — every — happiness," said Rebecca, slowly and faintly, and went on sewing mechanically.

Mr. Sutton looked at her inquiringly, but had already said more to her than was his custom at that period of her service, so he went about his business.

She sewed on still, feeling very cold, and soon the patient tears began to trickle, and then she put her work aside, and laid her brow against the corner of the shutter that the tears might run their course without spoiling her master's collars and cuffs.

Not long after this the housekeeper left, and Mr. Sutton sent for Rebecca. "You are young," he said, half hesitating, "but you are steady and faithful." Then he turned his back on her and looked at his wife's portrait. "Yes, Jane," said he, "we can but try her." Then, without turning from the picture, "Rebecca, take the housekeeper's keys and let us see how you can govern my house."

"I will try, sir," said she; then courtesied and left the room, with the tear in her eye at him consulting the picture of her they both loved.

Rebecca Barnes had made many observations upon servants and their ways, and entered on office with some fixed ideas of economy and management.

She did not hurry matters, but by degrees waste was quietly put down, the servants were compelled, contrary

to their nature, to return everything to its place; the weekly bills decreased, and yet the donations to worthy people increased.

She had held the keys, and nearly doubled their number, about eight months, when Mr. Sutton gave her an order. "Barnes," said he, "Joe and his wife are coming to see me next Wednesday at five o'clock. Get everything ready for them at once — give them the best bedroom — and make them comfortable."

"Yes, sir," said she, and went about it directly.

She summoned maids, saw fires lit, beds and blankets put down to them, not sheets only; took linen out of her lavender cupboard, ordered flowers, and secured the comfort of the visitors, though heats and chills pervaded her own body by turns at the thought of receiving Joe Newton and the woman he had preferred to herself. "She is beautiful, no doubt," thought Rebecca. "I wonder whether she knows? Oh, no; surely he would never tell her. He would be ashamed." The mere doubt, though, made her red and then pale.

The pair arrived with their own maid; a housemaid under orders showed them to their rooms; Rebecca Barnes kept out of their way at first, and steeled herself by degrees to the inevitable encounter.

She took her opportunity next day, and approached Mrs. Newton first with a civil inquiry if she could do anything for her.

"You are the — the" — drawled the lady.

"The housekeeper, madam."

"The housekeeper? You are very young for that."

"Not so young as I look, perhaps; and I have been sixteen years in the house." She then renewed her question.

"Not at present," was the reply. "I will send for you if I require anything."

The words were colorless in themselves, but there was a hard, unfriendly and superior tone in them rather out of place in a house where she was a guest and a new one, and kindly civility just being shown her.

Down-stairs the lady did not charm. She desired to please, but had not the tact. Her voice was high-pitched, and she could not listen. Her husband, however, was in ecstasy over her, and rather wearied his uncle with descanting on her perfections.

Things went on well enough until she got a little more familiar with uncle Samuel; and then, looking on him as virtually a bachelor, she must needs advise him from the heights of her matronly experience. She told him his housekeeper was too young for the place.

"She *is* young," said he, "but she has experience, and my dear wife taught her."

Instead of listening to that, and saying, "Ah, that alters the case," as most men or women would, this tactless young lady went on to say that she was too young and good-looking to be about a widower. It would set people talking, and so she strongly advised him to change her for some staid, respectable person.

"Mind your own business, my dear," replied the woolstapler, with such contemptuous resolution that she held her tongue directly, and contented herself just then with hating Rebecca Barnes for this repulse; but when she got hold of Joe, she scolded him well for the affront; she never saw she had drawn it on herself. It was not in her nature to see a fault in herself under any circumstances whatever.

Joe, physical hero, moral coward, dared not say a word, but took his unjust punishment meekly.

However, after dinner, owning to himself that this infallible creature had made a blunder, he set himself to remove any ill impression. He descanted on her virtues,

above all, her generosity and her zeal for her friends' interests, etc.

Uncle Sutton got sick of his marital mendacity, and said, "Now, Joe, don't you be an uxorious ass. She is your wife, and she is well enough; but she is no paragon." And so he shut *him* up.

They stayed a fortnight, and then went home. As Melusina had intruded her opinion on Rebecca, Mr. Sutton, who came more into contact with the latter now she was housekeeper, had the sly curiosity to ask her, in a half-careless way, what she thought of Joe's wife.

"Well, sir," said Rebecca, wiser and more on her guard than Melusina, "he might have done better, I think, and he might have done worse."

"Voice too shrill for me," said the master. "But I suppose he took her for her good looks."

"Good looks, sir! What, with a beak for a nose, and a slit for a mouth?"

Mr. Sutton laughed. "How you women do admire one another. Stop; now I think of it, this is ungrateful of you, for she told me you were too good-looking."

"Too good-looking!" said Rebecca. "What did she mean by that? Ah! she wanted you to part with me."

"Stuff and nonsense!" said he; but he colored a little at the abominable shrewdness of females in reading one another at half a word.

Rebecca was too discreet to press the matter; she pretended to accept the disavowal, but she did not. Joe's wife to come into the house on her first visit, and instantly endeavor to turn out the poor girl that had been there from a child!

"And he could look on and let her," said she; "he that thought it little to defend me against that giant. Men are so strange, and hard to understand."

Next year Joe came by himself, and charmed every

body. Rebecca at last kept out of his way, for she found the old affection reviving, and was frightened.

Two years more, and the pair came on a visit at one day's notice. But all was ready for them in that well-ordered house.

The motive of this hasty visit soon transpired. They had spent more than double their income since they married, owed two thousand pounds, and had an execution in the house.

Uncle Sutton was displeased. "Debt is dishonest," said he. "We can all cut our coat according to our cloth." But he ended by saying, "Well, make out a list of all the debts. Try if you can tell the truth now, both of you, and put them all down."

By this time Rebecca had become his accountant in private matters, and her fidelity and discretion had gradually earned his confidence. He actually consulted her on the situation — not that she could have influenced him against his own judgment. No man was more thoroughly master than Sam Sutton. But he was a solitary man, and it is hard to be always silent.

"Bad business, Rebecca. Now, I wonder what you would do in my place?"

"Do, sir? Why, pay Master Joe's debts directly. You will never miss it. But when I *had* paid them, I'd tell her not to come begging here again with a fortune on her back."

"Come, come," said Sutton, "she is dressed plainer than any lady in Frome. I will say that for her."

"La, sir! where are your eyes? What! with those furs and that old point lace? Three hundred guineas never bought them. There are no such furs in Frome. I've seen their fellows in London. They are Russian sables, the finest to be had for money. And look at her fingers, crippled with diamonds and rubies. There's

four or five hundred more, and that is how Master Joe's money goes. I pity him; he couldn't have done worse if he had married — a servant."

Mr. Sutton looked very grave. However, he sold out and drew the check. But, unfortunately, instead of lecturing the wife, he took the husband to task. He said he was sorry to see Mrs. Joseph so extravagant in dress.

"My dear uncle," replied he; "why, she is anything but that; she is most self-denying. I am the only one to blame, believe me."

"Now, you uxorious humbug," cried uncle Samuel; "can't you see she has got three hundred guineas on her back in lace and sable furs, and as much more on her fingers? Where are your eyes?"

Joe looked sheepish. "I am no judge of these things, uncle; but I feel sure you are mistaken."

"No, I am not mistaken. Everybody knows the value of sables and diamonds."

Joe retailed his conversation very timidly to his wife, not to make her less extravagant, but more cautious under uncle Sutton's eye. He took care to draw that distinction for the sake of peace.

His finesse was wasted. "It's the woman," said she, as quick as lightning.

"What woman?"

"The woman Barnes. She has told him — to make mischief."

"No, no; the old fox has got eyes of his own."

"Not for sables. It is the woman."

"Well, dear, I don't think so; but if it is, then I wouldn't give her the chance again."

"Me take off my sables because a woman is envious of them? *What do you think I bought them for?* I'll wear them all the more, ten times more."

"Hush! hush!" implored the weak husband, for the peacock voice, raised in defiance, was audible through doors at a considerable distance.

All this mortified Mrs. Joe's vanity, and that was her stronger passion. She came no more to Merino Lodge.

But she sent her husband once a year with orders to bring home some money, and get rid of the woman Barnes.

He was to tell Mr. Sutton that Barnes was a mercenary woman, and kept his wife away. But Joe's subservience relaxed when he got to Merino Lodge and his pea-hen could not watch him. He made himself agreeable to everybody.

One fine day he discovered that Rebecca was consulted in matters of domestic account, and that he owed the check he always took home in some degree to her good word as well as to his uncle's affection. Upon that he forgot he was to undermine her, and began to spoon a little on her; but this was received with a sort of shudder that brought him to his senses.

So the years rolled on, confirming the virtues and the faults of all these characters, for nothing stands still.

Joe Newton was forty-one, and looked forty-five: Rebecca Barnes thirty-eight, and looked twenty-five. Mrs. Newton was forty, and looked fifty; and Uncle Sutton, though fifty-seven, looked five-and forty, thanks to sober living, good-humor, and a fine constitution.

Joe's inheritance seemed distant, and he was always in debt, though often relieved.

But who can foretell? The stout wool-stapler was seized with a mysterious malady, frequent sickness, constant depression. He struggled manfully, went to his office ill, came back no better, but at last had to stay at home.

By and by he took to his bed.

Rebecca wrote to Joe Newton. He came and found his uncle eternally sick, and turning yellow.

Joe spoke hopefully, said it was only jaundice, but went away and told a different tale at home.

There he and his wife, demoralized by debt, discussed the approaching death of a great benefactor in hypocritical terms, through which eager expectation pierced.

"You are sure he has not made a fresh will? That woman has his ear."

"Make your mind easy, dear. He told me all about it himself not six months ago. He leaves us and our children all his money, except five thousand pounds to Rebecca Barnes."

"Five thousand pounds to a servant?"

"And only two hundred thousand pounds to us!" said Joe, hazarding a little humor.

"Tied up, I'll be bound."

"Well, dear," said Joe, "even if it should be, our children will benefit, and we shall have enough."

"Five thousand pounds to that woman! And not tied up, of course."

Joe could have told her from his uncle's own lips why he was to have a life-interest only in that large fortune. "Your wife is vain, selfish, and extravagant, and you are her slave. She shall not waste my money as she has yours. It is all secured to you and your children."

But Joe preferred peace to admonition, and kept his uncle's treasons to himself.

Mr. Sutton was tenderly nursed night and day by Rebecca Barnes and a young orphan girl she had brought into the house, as she herself had been brought thirty years ago. He was attended by Dr. Stevenson, an old friend.

But neither physic nor nursing could stop the fatal sickness that prostrated the strong man.

At last Dr. Stevenson and a physician he had summoned from London told Rebecca to prepare for the worst. He must die of inanition, and that shortly.

Rebecca sent a mounted messenger to Joe: "Come at once, or you will not see him alive."

Joe sent back word he would come by the first train.

But before he went his wife gave him instructions: "Now mind, if he knows you, and can speak, do nothing; but if he is insensible, you must begin to think of your interests: you are executor, you told me so."

"One of them."

"And the one on the spot. There are quantities of plate and valuables in the house. You must fix seals, and ask Barnes for her keys."

"Will not that be premature?"

"No, stupid; it will be just in time."

"Hum! she has been a faithful servant. I am afraid it would wound her feelings."

"The feelings of a menial! Besides, there are two ways of doing these things. Of course you will flatter her, and say you only want to relieve her of responsibility. But mind you secure her keys, or I'll never forgive you."

"Very well," said Joe. "I suppose you are right; *you always are.*"

He reached the Lodge, and Rebecca met him with a despairing cry, "O Mr. Joseph!" and led the way to the sickroom.

They found Mr. Sutton yellow and yet cadaverous, gasping and almost rattling for breath.

"He is dying," said Joe awe-struck. "He will not live an hour."

Presently the patient gasped desperately and tried to raise himself.

"Lift him!" cried Rebecca, and seized a basin, while Joe's strong arm raised him.

Instantly there burst from the patient a copious discharge of black blood, or what looked like it.

Joe turned pale, and cried, "Oh, it is the substance of the liver;" and he felt faint at the sight.

Rebecca stood firm. She gave the basin quickly to the girl, and filled Joe a glassful of neat brandy. He tossed it off, and it revived him.

They laid the patient back gently, and Rebecca felt his pulse. It was scarcely perceptible.

"He is going," she said. Then, looking round in despair, she seized a tablespoon, filled it with brandy, slightly diluted, and, opening his mouth, placed the spoon at the root of the tongue, and so got the contents down his throat.

As he retained it, she repeated the dose three times.

The patient lay motionless, no longer gasping, but just faintly breathing, as men do before life's little candle flickers out.

They sat down on each side of him in silence. He had been a good friend to both.

By and by Joe's dinner was announced. He asked Rebecca to come down and eat a morsel with him.

Rebecca was hospitable, but could not leave the moribund even for a moment. "No," said she; "I saw *her* die, and I must see *him* die."

Joe assured her he would not die till night, and said he could not eat alone.

Accustomed to oblige, Rebecca consented, though unwillingly. She summoned an elderly woman that was in the house, and bade her watch him with the young girl, and send down to her the moment there was any change.

Then she went reluctantly, and sat down opposite

REBECCA BARNES ROSE FROM THE TABLE.

Joseph Newton, pale and woe-begone. He had recovered himself, and ate a tolerable dinner. She tried, out of complaisance, but could only get a morsel or two down.

After a hasty meal, and two glasses of port, the Rev. Joseph Newton opened his commission. He began as directed. He dilated upon her long and faithful service, and then told her he knew she was not forgotten, or he would have felt bound to take care of her.

While he delivered these sugar-plums he did not look her in the face, and so he did not observe that her eye was fixed on him and never moved.

Having thus prepared the way, he proceeded in a briefer style to say that he was his uncle's executor, and a great responsibility was now about to fall on him; unfortunately he could not stay here all night to discharge those sad duties, so perhaps it would be as well to intrust him with her keys before he left.

Then Rebecca, who had hitherto been keenly observant and silent, said, very quietly, "Give you my keys, sir? What! do you mistrust me?"

"Of course not; my only object is to relieve you of so great a responsibility, where there are so many servants and so many valuables about."

"Valuables about! That is not my way, sir. There is nothing loose in this house more than I can keep my eye on."

"An excellent system," said Joe, warmly. "I promise to follow it. But, to do so, I must have an executor's power. Come, Rebecca, I must return by the five o'clock train; please oblige me with your keys; the places that have none, you and I will seal up together."

Rebecca Barnes rose from the table so straight she seemed six feet high, and the eyes that had watched him like a cat from the first syllable he had uttered flashed lightning at him.

"You have spoken a woman's mind; take a woman's answer. What! you couldn't wait till the breath was out of that poor dear body before you must lay your greedy hands upon his goods."

Joe rose in his turn. "Rebecca, you forget yourself."

"No, I remember too well. Twenty years ago you did your best to ruin me; and, when you couldn't, you trifled with my affections, held me in hand for years, and flung me away without one grain of pity; you broke my heart, and made me a servant for life. Now you insult the faithful servant, you that were false to the faithful lover. Trust you with my keys, you false-hearted — No, sir." And she folded her arms superbly. "Go back to your wife and tell her if she wants to *rob* him she must *kill* him first, and me too; for while he lives I am mistress of this house, and she and you are — NOBODY."

Then she turned her back on him as only a tall, disdainful woman can, and flew wildly up-stairs to her dying master.

CHAPTER II.

AFTER all, once in twenty years is not often to vent one's outraged feelings, and those who smother their fiery wrongs too long owe nature an explosion.

But Rebecca Barnes, though wild with passion, was by nature anything but a virago. So, even as she flew up the stairs, the rain followed the thunder, and it was in a wild distress, not fury, she darted into her master's room, hurried the other women out of it, and flung herself on her knees by his. "O master, master!" she cried, "is it come to this? They wish you dead! They want your plate; they want your china; they want your money;

they don't want you. For all the good you have done, only one poor woman will shed a tear for you." Then she began to mumble his hand and wet it with her honest tears.

"Now I understand my dream," said a calm, faint voice that seemed to come from the other world.

Rebecca sprang to her feet with a scream, and eyed him keenly.

"You are better."

"I am. There was something growing inside me. I always said so. It has broken. I feel lighter now."

Rebecca flung herself on her knees again.

"O master! then don't give in. Try, try, try, and you'll get well. If you won't get well to please poor me, do pray get well to spite those heartless creatures. They couldn't wait. They demanded my keys, they were so hot to take possession."

"Joe and his wife?"

"Put her first; he is her slave. He has no heart or conscience when she gives the order. But let's you and I baffle them. Let us get well."

"I mean to," said he slowly, "so where's the sense of your sobbing and crying like that?"

"Dear heart, what can I do? The fear of losing you — the affront — my anger — my hope — my joy — of course I must cry. Oh! oh! oh! La! how you smell of brandy."

"Ay, brandy has been my best friend. I drank about a pint while you were down-stairs."

"Oh, goodness gracious me! a pint of brandy!"

"Tell ye it saved me. I'm sleepy."

He went off to sleep. Rebecca covered him up warm and fanned him gently. He slept some hours, and on awaking asked for brandy and yolk of egg. He took this at intervals.

Dr. Stevenson came, examined and felt him all over, and found him full of vital warmth, looked at what had come from him, and said, "Better an empty house than a bad tenant." In a word, pronounced him out of danger.

During his convalescence, Mr. Sutton talked more to Rebecca than he had ever done, and told her that at one time he never expected to live. "For," said he solemnly, "I was as near my dear wife as I am to you. I could not see her, unfortunately, but she spoke to me."

"Oh, sir, tell me; you'll tell *me*. I loved her; I had reason."

"Yes, I will tell *you*," said he. "She said, 'Not now, Samuel. There was only one woman shed a tear for me, and only one will shed a tear for you.'" He reflected a little. "Now I think of it, that was bidding me to live this time. Yes, Jenny, my love, I'll live and teach some folk a lesson — they have taught *me* one."

He ordered Rebecca to write and ask his lawyer to come to him at once with two witnesses.

Rebecca had cooled by this time, and began to be a little alarmed at the turn things were taking; so she said she had been a good deal put out about the keys, and he must not take to heart every word an angry woman said.

"Mind your own business," was his reply. "Write as I bade you."

The lawyer came with his witnesses. Rebecca retired.

When she reappeared she seemed so uneasy that he said to her, "You needn't look as if you had robbed a church. I have not disinherited Joe."

"I am right-down glad of that."

"But I have cut him down a bit, and I've changed my executor. Now please remember — the next time I die — *you* are my sole executor; and your keys never leave you."

She cast a beaming look of affection and gratitude on him. He had applied the right salve to her wound. She belonged to a sex that does not always weigh things in our balances. She was not very greedy of money, but to take her keys from her was to dishonor her in her office.

It was soon public that Mr. Sutton had made a new will — contents unknown. Lawyers do not reveal such secrets spontaneously.

"We are disinherited," cried Joe's wife; "and by that woman Barnes. I always warned you how it would end: but you never would get rid of her. We have you to thank for it, the children and I."

Joe resisted for once. "No," said he, "it is all your doing. She would have let you alone if you had let her alone. But you were in such a hurry to insult her, you could not wait till it was safe."

What, ho! Mutiny! Rebellion! And by the head of the house, paragon of submission hitherto! Mrs. Joe went into a fury, and threatened to leave him and take the children — a menace I would have welcomed with rapture: but it ended in his apologizing for his gleam of reason.

When Mr. Sutton had kept them on tenterhooks for a month and more, and was in better health than ever he had been, he instructed his lawyers to answer the questions of coarse or interested curiosity, and it soon became public that he had made an equal division, half to his nephew's family, with life interest to Joseph himself, and half to Rebecca Barnes and her heirs forever, the said Rebecca being his wife's *protégée*, and his faithful housekeeper and nurse.

Joe liked this much better than being disinherited. "Come, Melly," said he, "blood is thicker than water. I am content. A hundred thousand pounds is not starvation."

Mrs. Joe, however, did not seem to think so; at least, she complained rather louder than before. "To share our inheritance with a menial," said she, and repeated this in more places than one. She even inoculated Dr. Stevenson with this gentle phrase, and prevailed on him to offer friendly advice to his late patient, and gave him hints what to say. Mrs. Joe was his best client, being full of imaginary disorders, so he adopted her course; called on Mr. Sutton, was heartily welcomed, promised him thirty years more, and then took the liberty of an old friend to advise him. Joe had a young family. The division was not equal, and would it not be a pity to leave disproportionate wealth to a menial?

"A menial?" inquired Sutton, affecting innocent ignorance of his meaning.

"Well, it is a harsh term, but it is what people are saying just now, and would say louder over your tombstone; and, after all, whoever you pay wages to is a menial, and if large fortunes are left to them, especially females, why, somehow, it always makes scandal, and throws discredit on an honored name. I hope you will not be angry with me for speaking freely — we are old friends."

Mr. Sutton seemed to ponder. "I am afraid you are right. It is too much money to leave to a *menial*." Then, suddenly — "Seen Joe and his wife lately?"

"I saw them only yesterday," said the doctor, off his guard. "May I venture to tell them you will reconsider the matter?"

"Not from me. But you can tell who you like that, on second thoughts, I ought not to make a *menial* my executor."

"You are right. And I suppose you will not leave such a very large fortune" —

"To a *menial?* No."

The doctor went away pleased at his influence. Mr. Sutton rang the bell, and bade a servant send Rebecca to him.

When she came he handed her a draft for a hundred pounds, and told her she must get a wedding-dress ready made, and waste no time, for she was to be married right off by special license.

"Me!" said she staring, and then blushing. "Never!"

"Next Monday at half-past ten," said he calmly.

"No, sir," said she resolutely. "I'll never leave my master. I always respected you, and now — I have nursed you. I — Don't ask me to leave you, for I won't. Forgive me. I cannot. How could I? The idea!"

"Who asks you, goose? It is me you have got to marry."

"You, sir?" She blushed like a girl, she laughed, she looked at him to see if he were in earnest; then she said, "Well, I never!"

"Come, Becky," said he, "you are a woman now; don't waste time like a girl."

"I *am* a woman," said she, "and too much your friend to do this foolishness. Where's the use? I shall never leave you, whether or no. And finely the folk would talk if you were to marry your servant. See how they always do on such occasion. No, sir; if you will be ruled by me for *once* (she had been guiding him for years), you will let well alone. As a servant you have got a very good bargain in Becky Barnes; but I should be a bad bargain as a wife."

"Don't you — teach me — my business — Becky Barnes," said the master, severely. "I have been making bargains all my life, and never a bad one. 'Try 'em before you buy 'em,' is a safe rule, and terribly neglected in marriages. I have had you under my eye twenty

years in health and sickness. You are a good housekeeper, a tender nurse, a faithful friend, and you are going to be a good wife. Come, you'll have to obey me at last, so don't waste words, and don't waste time."

By this time Rebecca's face was red and her eye moist at such unwonted praise from a man who never exaggerated or flattered.

She looked at him softly, and said, with a pretty air of mock defiance, —

"I'll tell everybody you *made* me."

"Say what you like, my dear, and do what I bid you." So then he drew her to him and kissed her; put the draft into her hand, and despatched her to make her purchases.

Her pride was gratified. The nursing had brought their hearts nearer to each other, and she said to herself, —

"After all, what does it matter to *me?* And if *he* is unhappy, why, it will be my fault. He shall not be unhappy!"

She made her own wedding-dress for fear of unpunctual milliners.

Sunday night she had one cry over the illusions of her youth. It was but a short one. She asked herself if those two men stood before her now which she should take.

"Why, the man, and not the cur."

They were married privately on Monday at half-past ten.

At eleven came by appointment the lawyer and two witnesses. Mrs. Samuel Sutton was sent up-stairs to put on her travelling-dress. Meantime, Mr. Sutton and the lawyer did business.

"Mr. Dawson, my second will was open to objection. I left too much to a menial."

"Well, sir," said the lawyer, "it was not for me to advise."

"But you agree with me."

"Perfectly."

"Well, then, cancel will two."

"Both wills are cancelled by your marriage, sir."

"Ah! I forgot. Well, draw me a will on the lines of my first. Only no rigmarole this time. I'm in a hurry. You can charge me for a volume, but put it all in the ace of spades, that's a good soul."

The lawyer consented, and handed Mr. Sutton testament number one to peruse, and reminded him that in that testament the whole property was left to the Rev. Joseph Newton and his children — all but five thousand pounds to Rebecca Barnes.

"My menial?"

"Yes. But five thousand pounds was not excessive."

"Not at all, if you knew the two parties. Well, sir, I don't think we can improve on the *form* of that will. Just reverse the provisions, that is all."

The lawyer stared.

"Leave the five thousand pounds to my nephew to play ducks and drakes with, and all my real and personal estate to my wife, Rebecca Sutton, and her heirs forever."

The lawyer stared, bowed, and set to work. Mr. Sutton left him to prepare for his journey, but in a few minutes came back and hurried him.

"Come, polish that off," said he. "We have only half an hour to get to the station."

"I could engross it, and send it up to you for signature," suggested the solicitor.

"What, me go by rail intestate? No, thank you."

The will was drawn and attested, and as he signed it Sutton said to the lawyer, "You see I have not left

my fortune to a menial;" then bitterly, "nor yet to mercenaries."

The wedded pair dashed up to London. Each looked lovingly at the other on the road, and Sutton said to himself, "I have done this marriage in a vulgar way. She was entitled to more sentiment; and — by Jove! *now I look at her* — she is a duck."

He was right; every woman likes to be courted; and this one deserved it. Well, he first courted her after marriage instead of before; courted her as if she were a complete novelty; presents, nosegays, attentions of every kind; always by her side, and finding her some pleasure or another; and always good-humored, kind, and courteous in a plain, manly way.

She came back beaming with happiness, and he wore a conquering air that made folks smile.

Sneers flew about at home and abroad, and Mr. Sutton was now and then discomposed.

Rebecca's watchful eye saw it. She never said a word about it, but she ruminated.

One day the study-door was ajar, and she heard Mr. Sutton's voice louder than usual. A tradesman was there and had said something blunt; she gathered as much from Mr. Sutton's answer. "Why, here's a to-do because a plain man of business has married his housekeeper that was brought up by his wife; and her father was just what I am, only not so lucky. One would think a duke had gone and married his kitchen wench. Well, yes, I took a peach out of my own garden instead of a prickly pear out of a swell hothouse; and all the better for me, and all the worse for Joe Newton."

Rebecca heard this in passing, turned round and put the tips of the fingers of both hands to her lips and blew the speaker a kiss through the door with an ardor, an abandon, and a grace that would have adorned a lady of distinction.

Next morning she went to work in her way. "My dear," said she, gayly, "I wonder whether you would give me a treat?"

"Well, Becky, I am not fond of denying you."

"No, indeed, you over-indulge me. But, the truth is, I have a great desire to see foreign countries, if it is agreeable to you, dear."

"Agreeable to me! Why, I have been going to do it these thirty years."

"Oh, I am so glad! Then will you arrange a tour for us — a nice long one?"

Mr. Sutton fell into this without seeing all that lay behind. It was a fair specimen of Rebecca's handiwork. By this means the house was shut up, the satirical servants discharged without a wrangle, and his friends and neighbors taught the value of Samuel Sutton by his absence.

The couple travelled Europe wisely; never bound themselves to leave a place half enjoyed, nor stay in it exhausted. They were eighteen months away, but spent the last six in a lovely villa near the Bois de Boulogne.

They came home with a thumping boy and a Norman nurse, and both parents looked younger than when they went.

The news spread like wildfire.

"They bought that child abroad," said Mrs. Joe.

Alas! for that romantic theory, Rebecca nursed him herself and gloated over him, as mothers will, and fourteen months later produced a lovely girl.

The parents were happy in their children and themselves; both found in their own hearts unsuspected treasures of tenderness.

The wool-stapler was dictatorial in his own house; his wife docile whenever he laid down the law; but, if

he directed, she suggested, and he generally went her way, sometimes without knowing it. Under her gentle influence he arranged a large, business-like system of personal charity, and this increased so as to find them both occupation, and withdraw him by degrees from active trade without subjecting him to *ennui*.

He became a sleeping partner in the wool trade and an active partner in a large scheme of education, and judicious loans and relief, much of which emanated by degrees from an enlarged housekeeper feeling her way, and possessed of administrative ability.

When they drove out together they often sat hand in hand as well as side by side, and one plain friend who saw their ways declared they were a young couple, and he would prove it.

"Ay, prove that, you dog!" said Samuel Sutton, laughing.

"Well, I will. 'A man is as old as he feels, and a woman's as old as she looks.'"

The proverb was admitted and the application thereof.

After a long struggle between poverty and pride, the Rev. Joseph Newton wrote to his uncle a piteous tale of his young family, and begged relief.

He received an answer by return of post: —

MY DEAR JOE, — This sort of thing is in your aunt's department. You had better write to her.

Then there was fury in the house of Newton. Reproaches — defiance. "Apply to that woman — never!"

A few more months and county court summonses, and Joe was reproached as a bad father, who could not sacrifice his pride to his children's welfare.

So then Joe sent the hat to his aunt. He got a word of comfort and one hundred pounds by return of post. He was melted with gratitude, and said so openly.

Mrs. Joe snubbed him, and said it was a mere drop out of the ocean the woman had robbed them of.

Not a year passed without a contribution of this kind, sometimes unasked, sometimes solicited. Aunt Rebecca drew the checks, Uncle Samuel connived with a shrug; it was money thrown into a bottomless pit, and he knew it.

Only once did Aunt Rebecca send advice to her dilapidated nephew: "You have enough if you could but be master in your own house."

Which was wasted most, the advice or the money, is a problem to be solved by him who shall have squared the circle.

Years have rolled on, but they are all alive, these little studies; to call them characters might seem presumptuous.

When last seen, Mr. Sutton was eighty, and looked sixty; Joe sixty-two, and looked seventy; Rebecca sixty, and looked forty — thanks to goodness, a nature affectionate, not passionate, and her light brick-dust color; Mrs. Joseph Newton sixty-one, and looked eighty.

"Scornful dogs eat dirty puddings." She still speaks disdainfully of "that woman," and takes that woman's money, and awaits the decease of Uncle Samuel, and he looks the very man to outlive her.

The title of this story is a fine one, and there are many examples of its truth in history besides the above tale, the leading incident of which is true to the letter. That title, though it reads idiomatic, is but a happy translation. The original is Greek, and comes down to us with an example. To the best of my recollection, the ancient legend runs that a Greek philosopher was discoursing to his pupil on the inability of man to foresee the future — ay, even the event of the next minute.

The pupil may have, perhaps, granted the uncertainty of the distant future, but he scouted the notion that men could not make sure of immediate and consecutive events. By way of illustration, he proceeded to fill a goblet.

"I predict," said he, sneeringly, "that after filling this goblet, the next event will be, I shall drink the wine."

Accordingly he filled the goblet. At that moment his servant ran in. "Master, master! a wild boar is in our vineyard!"

The master caught up his javelin directly, and ran out to find the boar and kill him.

He had the luck to find the boar, and attacked him with such spirit that Sir Boar killed him, and the goblet remained filled.

From that incident arose in Greece the saying: —

Πολλα μεταξυ πελει κυλικος και χειλεος ακρου.

This has been Englished thus: —

There's many a slip
'Twixt the cup and the lip.

And to my mind the superiority of the English language is shown here, for an original writer has always a certain advantage over a translator; yet the English couplet expresses in eleven syllables all that the Greek hexameter says in sixteen; and our couplet, close as it is, can be reduced to seven syllables without weakening or obscuring the sense: —

Many a slip
'Twixt cup and lip.

THE TWO LEARS.

Geoffrey of Monmouth tells the old British legend of King Leir. Holinshed repeats it, and from him Shakespeare took it, and made the dry bones live. In that great master's hands the tale broadened and deepened. It became more tragical than the original record.

This is the outline of Shakespeare's story: —

King Lear, being old, and disposed to enjoy ease and dignity without the cares of state, resolved to divide his kingdom among his three daughters. Their names were Goneril, Duchess of Albany, Regan, Duchess of Cornwall, and Cordelia, unmarried, but courted by the King of France and the Duke of Burgundy, then a powerful monarch, though nominally vassal to the French King.

When it came to the division, the old King was weak enough to tell his daughters he should give the larger share to the one who loved him best, and should prove her love by words.

This was to invite cheap protestations, and accordingly two of the ladies, Goneril and Regan, vied in lip-love. Goneril said she loved him more than words could utter, yet she found words to paint filial love in tolerably glowing terms; for she went so far as to say that she loved him dearer than eyesight, space, or liberty, and no less than honor, beauty, health, and life itself; with more to the same tune.

Regan could not soar above this; so she had the address to say that her sister had spoken her very mind, only she, Regan, went a little farther, and detested all other joys but that of filial love.

The royal parent believed all this, and then turned to his favorite, his youngest, and asked her what she could say to draw from him a larger dowry than her sisters had just earned — with their tongues.

Cordelia. Nothing, my lord.
Lear. Nothing?
Cordelia. Nothing.
Lear. Nothing can come of nothing: speak again.

Cordelia was a little frightened at her father's anger; but she would only say that she loved her father as a daughter should; she obeyed him, loved him, honored him, and thought it no merit, but a thing of course. She also declined frankly to believe that her sisters, who were wives, had no love for their husbands, only for their father; nor could she promise to reserve all her love for her father, and give none to the man she might wed.

The fact is, she being a woman, her sisters were such transparent humbugs to her that it made her rather blunt in her honesty, and she did not gild the pill.

Lear. So young, and so untender?
Cordelia. So young, my lord, and true.
Lear. Let it be so; thy truth then be thy dower.

He then went into a violent passion, and disowned her as his daughter, and ordered her from his presence, while he settled with his favored daughters what retinue he was to have as a retired king, and where he was to live.

Afterward he sent for Cordelia and the princes her

suitors; he told them to her face he had disinherited her, and he used terms of invective so ambiguous that Cordelia, who had borne all the rest in silence, now interfered, and appealed to his justice to tell those gentlemen she had lost his favor not by any unchaste or dishonorable act, but for want of a greedy eye and a flattering tongue.

Lear evaded this remonstrance, and upbraided her again in general terms; but Cordelia's appeal was not lost upon her suitors. Burgundy, indeed, only offered to take her with the dowry originally proposed, and on the King refusing this, he declined her hand. But thereupon this pitiable scene was redeemed by a trait of nobility. France, who had come there for a rich dowry as well as a bride, was now fired with nobler sentiments, and welcomed a pearl of womanhood, without land or money:

> Fairest Cordelia, thou art most rich, being poor;
> Most choice, forsaken; and most loved, despised!
> Thy dowerless daughter, King, thrown to my chance,
> Is Queen of us, of ours, and our fair France:
> Not all the dukes of wat'rish Burgundy
> Shall buy this unprized, precious maid of me.

Even this noble burst did not enlighten or soften the impetuous old King, whose vanity had been publicly wounded. He actually took the arm of Burgundy, the paltry duke who had admitted he wooed the lady only for her substance, and he bade the only daughter who really loved him begone,

> Without his love, his grace, his benison.

France was as glad to have her as he to part with her, and so she disappeared for a time from the scene.

Now the terms of Lear's retirement, which I alluded

to above, were these: he was to retain the title of a king, and a retinue of a hundred knights, to be kept at the expense of his regal daughters, and he and that retinue were to reside a month at a time with each princess in turn.

He began his new life in the palace of his daughter Goneril.

He and his knights soon became burdensome to that lady, and she made the most of every little offence. She resolved to shift him on to her sister, and gave insidious instructions to her major-domo:

> Put on what weary negligence you please,
> You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question.
> If he dislike it, let him to my sister,
> Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one —
> Not to be overruled. Idle old man,
> That still would manage those authorities
> That he hath given away.

These perfidious instructions bore fruit immediately. Goneril's head-servant was insolent to Lear; the impetuous King beat him, and was soon afterward confronted by his daughter, who, to his amazement, took him to task in cold and lofty terms for his disorderly conduct and that of his train. With regard to the latter, she told him plainly he must discharge one-half of them, or she should do it for him.

This cool insolence, coming so soon after the violent protestations, put Lear in a fury.

> Darkness and devils!
> Saddle my horses; call my train together.
> Degenerate bastard, I'll not trouble thee!
> Yet have I left a daughter.
>
> *Goneril.* You strike my people, and your disordered rabble
> Make servants of their betters.

These two speeches alone may serve to show which was likely to prevail in this unnatural combat — the hot-headed, warm-hearted King, or his cold-blooded, iron daughter. Lear's rage broke into curses, but ended in tears that were like drops of blood from his wounded heart, and at last he turned away from that ungrateful serpent, and journeyed to the court of Regan.

But a letter from Goneril reached that palace before the ex-King, and he actually found some difficulty in obtaining an audience of his own daughter.

At last she and her husband met him, but outside the house.

At sight of her his swelling breast overflowed, and he told her her sister was ungrateful, and had struck him to the heart. "O Regan!" he sobbed.

Regan calmly begged him to be patient, and said he had misunderstood her sister: it was for his own good she had restrained the riots of his followers. She reminded him he was old, insinuated he was in his dotage, and needed the control of wiser people; and to conclude, she coolly advised him to return to her sister, and beg her pardon.

"What!" cried he; "when she has abated me of half my train, looked black upon me, and struck her serpent fangs into my heart?" He then, in his rage, called down all manner of curses on his eldest daughter.

Says Regan, "Why, you will be cursing me next."

In the midst of this who should arrive but Goneril and her attendants, on a visit to Regan.

Regan received her instantly with a cordiality she had not shown to her father and benefactor.

Lear was amazed at that, after what he had said, and exclaimed, "O Regan, will you take her by the hand?"

It was Goneril who replied to this, and with the most galling and contemptuous insolence: —

Why not by the hand, sir? How have I offended?
All's not offence that indiscretion finds
And dotage terms so.

At this the poor old King prayed to Heaven for patience.

Regan paid no attention to that, but coldly stuck to her point. She advised him to comply with Goneril's terms, strike off half his knights, and conclude his month. After that he could come to her. At present his visit would not be convenient.

Lear refused hotly.

"As you please," said Goneril coldly.

Regan persisted, and said that, in fact, fifty followers were too many in another person's house. How could so many people, under two commands, hold amity?

Then Goneril put in her word. Why could he not be attended on by *their* servants?

"To be sure," said Regan. "Then, if they were disrespectful, we could control them. At all events," said she, "when you come to me, bring no more than twenty-five."

He asked her if that was her last word. She said it was. Then the poor old King said Goneril was better than she was. Yes, he would go back with Goneril, and dismiss half his retinue.

One would have thought these clever, heartless women had bandied the poor old man to and fro enough. But Goneril had no mercy; this was her reply, when he consented to her own proposition: —

Goneril. Hear me, my lord:
What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five,
To follow in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?
Regan. What need *one?*

So they trumped each other's cards, and coldly drove him wild.

He raged and stormed at them unheeded. He wept with agony unheeded. He left them both, and went forth into the stormy night a houseless king, a banished father.

Crushed vanity is hard to bear. Wounded affection is hard to bear. Under the double agony the poor old King lost his reason, and wandered about the kingdom like a beggar.

Meantime, his despised curses began to work, for his wicked daughters prepared their own chastisement by their own crimes; and here the poet has well shown that the hearts cold to divine affection could be hot with illicit love as well as spurred by greed.

But now it was reported in France how the old King had been abused, and Queen Cordelia, indignant, invaded the kingdom with a French army. Her emissaries found the poor King in a miserable condition, living in rags, and sleeping in out-houses and stables. She had him laid, all unconscious, on a fair bed in her own tent, with music softly playing, and her own physician waiting on him. She herself nursed him, with deep anxiety for his waking.

All was changed. She, who in his hour of pride and prosperity had said she loved him only as every daughter ought to love her father, now overflowed with passionate tenderness. She took his gray head to her filial bosom, and bemoaned him. "Was this a face," said she, "to be opposed to the warring winds? On such a night, too! Why, I would have given shelter to my enemy's dog, though he had bitten me. And wast thou fain, poor father, to hovel thee with swine on musty straw?"

While she was thus lamenting over him, the sore-tried King awoke; but not his memory. He thought he had

been dead, and told them they did wrong to take him out of the grave where he rested from his sufferings. The happy change in his condition brought him no joy at first; it did but confuse and puzzle him. He looked at Cordelia, and saw she was a queen, and tried to kneel to her. But she would not let him, and kneeled to him instead, and begged him to hold his hand over her and give her a parent's blessing. Seeing so great a lady at his feet, craving his blessing, let some light into his distracted mind, and drew from the once fiery old man sweet, piteous words that have made many an eye wet.

> Pray do not mock me;
> I am a very foolish fond old man,
> Fourscore and upward; and, to deal plainly,
> I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
> Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
> Yet I am doubtful — for I am mainly ignorant
> What place this is — and all the skill I have
> Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
> Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;
> For, as I am a man, I think this lady
> To be my child Cordelia.
> *Cordelia.* And so I am, I am.

Then the poor soul, seeing her weep, bade her not cry, and offered to drink poison if she chose; for he said she had far more reason to hate him than her sisters had.

But she soon convinced him of her love, and from that time they never parted.

At this very time Goneril and Regan died by poison and suicide, and so paid the forfeit of their crimes.

But all this was on the eve of a battle between the French and English forces, and in that battle, deplorable to relate, Cordelia was slain, and Lear mustered strength

to kill her assassin, and then the last chord of his sore-tried heart gave way, and he died by the side of his loved daughter, who had professed so little, yet had done so much and died for him.

This is the heart of Shakespeare's story. There is an inferior hand visible in parts of it; it is clogged with useless characters and superfluous atrocities, and the death of Cordelia is revolting, and a sacrifice of the narrative to stage policy. But all that pertains directly to King Lear is exquisite, and so masterly that the tale has extinguished the legend. Historically incorrect, it is true in art, all but the sacrifice of Cordelia, which, coupled with the other deaths, turns the theatre into a shambles, and, above all, disturbs the true motive of the tale. When the reader finds the sore-tried old man lying on a soft couch tended by Queen Cordelia, and when at last he knows her, and they mingle their tears and their love, the reader sees this is the lightening before death, and the mad king has recovered his wits to be just to his one child, and then to fall asleep after life's fitful fever. Against such a tale, so told, no previous legend can fight. Under such a spell you can neither conceive nor believe that Lear recovered his kingdom and caroused again at the head of his knights, and toasted his one child. Youth may recover any wound; but old age and royal vanity crushed and trampled on, and paternal love struck to the heart by the serpent's tooth of filial ingratitude, what should they do but rage and die?

Yet there is a legend, almost as old as Lear, of a father whom his children treated as Goneril and Regan treated Lear; but he suffered and survived, and his heart turned bitter instead of breaking.

Of this prose Lear the story is all over Europe, and, like most old stories, told vilely. To that, however,

there happens to be one exception, and the readers of this collection shall have the benefit of it.

In a certain part of Ireland, a long time ago, lived a wealthy old farmer whose name was Brian Taafe. His three sons, Guillaum, Shamus, and Garret, worked on the farm. The old man had a great affection for them all; and finding himself grow unfit for work, he resolved to hand his farm over to them and sit quiet by the fireside. But as that was not a thing to be done lightly, he thought he would just put them to their trial. He would take the measure of their intelligence, and then of their affection.

Proceeding in this order, he gave them each a hundred pounds, and quietly watched to see what they did with it.

Well, Guillaum and Shamus put their hundred pounds out to interest, every penny; but when the old man questioned Garret where his hundred pounds was, the young man said, "I spent it, father."

"Spent it!" said the old man, aghast. "Is it the whole hundred pounds?"

"Sure I thought you told us we might lay it out as we plaised."

"Is that a raison ye'd waste the whole of it in a year, ye prodigal?" cried the old man; and he trembled at the idea of his substance falling into such hands.

Some months after this he applied the second test.

He convened his sons, and addressed them solemnly: "I'm an old man, my children; my hair is white on my head, and it's time I was giving over trade and making my sowl." The two elder overflowed with sympathy. He then gave the dairy-farm and the hill to Shamus, and the meadows to Guillaum. Thereupon these two vied with each other in expressions of love and gratitude. But Garret said never a word; and this, coupled with his behavior about the hundred pounds, so mad

dened the old man that he gave Garret's portion, namely, the home and the home-farm, to his elder brothers to hold in common. Garret he disinherited on the spot, and in due form. That is to say, he did not overlook him nor pass him by; but even as spiteful testators used to leave the disinherited one a shilling, that he might not be able to say he had been inadvertently omitted and it was all a mistake, old Brian Taafe solemnly presented young Garret Taafe with a hazel staff and a small bag. Poor Garret knew very well what that meant. He shouldered the bag and went forth into the wide world with a sad heart but a silent tongue. His dog, Lurcher, was for following him, but he drove him back with a stone.

On the strength of the new arrangement, Guillaum and Shamus married directly, and brought their wives home, for it was a large house, and room for all.

But the old farmer was not contented to be quite a cipher, and he kept finding fault with this and that. The young men became more and more impatient of his interference, and their wives fanned the flame with female pertinacity — so that the house was divided, and a very home of discord.

This went on getting worse and worse, till at last, one winter afternoon, Shamus defied his father openly before all the rest, and said, "I'd like to know what would plaise ye? Maybe ye'd like to turn us all out as ye did Garret?"

The old farmer replied with sudden dignity, "If I did, I'd take no more than I gave."

"What good was your giving it?" said Guillaum; "we get no comfort of it while you are in the house."

"Do you talk that way to me too?" said the father, deeply grieved. "If it was poor Garret I had, he wouldn't use me so."

"Much thanks the poor boy ever got from you," said one of the women, with venomous tongue; then the other woman, finding she could count on male support, suggested to her father-in-law to take his stick and pack and follow his beloved Garret. "Sure he'd find him begging about the counthry."

At the women's tongues the wounded parent turned to bay.

"I don't wonder at anything I hear *ye* say. Ye never yet heard of anything good that a woman would have a hand in, — only mischief always. If ye ask who made such a road, or built a bridge, or wrote a great histhory, or did a great action, you'll never hear it's a woman done it; but if there is a jewel with swords and guns, or two boys cracking each other's crowns with shillalahs, or a didly secret let out, or a character ruined, or a man brought to the gallows, or mischief made between a father and his own flesh and blood, then I'll engage you'll hear a woman had some call to it. We needn't have recoorse to histhory to know your doin's, 'tis undher our eyes; for 'twas the likes o' ye two burnt Throy, and made the King o' Leinsther rebel against Brian Boru."

These shafts of eloquence struck home; the women set up a screaming, and pulled their caps off their heads, which in that part was equivalent to gentlefolks drawing their swords.

"O murther, murther! was it for this I married you, Guillaum Taafe?"

"Och, Shamus, will ye sit an' hear me compared to the likes? Would I rebel against Brian Boru, Shamus, a'ra gal?"

"Don't heed him, avourneen," said Shamus: "he is an ould man."

But she would not be pacified. "Oh vo, vo! If ever I thought the likes 'ud be said of me, that I'd rebel against Brian Boru!"

As for the other, she prepared to leave the house. "Guillaum," said she, "I'll never stay a day undher your roof with them as would say I'd burn Throy. Does he forget he ever had a mother himself? Ah! 'tis a bad apple, that is what it is, that despises the tree it sprung from."

All this heated Shamus, so that he told the women sternly to sit down, for the offender should go; and upon that, to show they were of one mind, Guillaum deliberately opened the door. Lurcher ran out, and the wind and the rain rushed in. It was a stormy night.

Then the old man took fright and humbled himself: —

"Ah, Shamus, Guillaum, achree; let ye have it as ye will; I'm sorry for what I said, a'ra gal! Don't turn me out on the high-road in my ould days, Guillaum, and I'll engage I'll niver open my mouth against one o' ye the longest day I live. Ah, Shamus, it isn't long I have to stay wid ye, anyway. Yer own hair will be as white as mine yet, plaise God; and ye'll be thanking Him ye showed respect to mine this night."

But they were all young and of one mind, and they turned him out and barred the door.

He crept away, shivering in the wind and rain, till he got on the lee side of a stone wall, and there he stopped and asked himself whether he could live through the night.

Presently something cold and smooth poked against his hand: it was a large dog that had followed him unobserved till he stopped. By a white mark on his breast he saw it was Lurcher, Garret's dog.

"Ah," said the poor old wanderer, "you are not so wise a dog as I thought, to follow me!" When he spoke to the dog, the dog fondled him. Then he burst out sobbing and crying, "Ah, Lurcher! Garret was not

wise either; but he would niver have turned me to the door this bitter night, nor even thee." And so he moaned and lamented. But Lurcher pulled his coat, and by his movements conveyed to him that he should not stay there all night; so then he crept on and knocked at more than one door, but did not obtain admittance, it was so tempestuous. At last he lay down exhausted on some straw in the corner of an out-house; but Lurcher lay close to him, and it is probable the warmth of the dog saved his life that night.

Next day the wind and rain abated; but this aged man had other ills to fight against besides winter and rough weather. The sense of his sons' ingratitude and his own folly drove him almost mad. Sometimes he would curse, and thirst for vengeance, sometimes he would shed tears that seemed to scald his withered cheeks. He got into another county and begged from door to door. As for Lurcher, he did not beg: he used to disappear, often for an hour at a time, but always returned, and often with a rabbit or even a hare in his mouth. Sometimes the friends exchanged them for a gallon of meal, sometimes they roasted them in the woods. Lurcher was a civilized dog, and did not like them raw.

Wandering hither and thither, Brian Taafe came at last within a few miles of his own house; but he soon had cause to wish himself farther off it; for here he met his first downright rebuff, and, cruel to say, he owed it to his hard-hearted sons. One recognized him as the father of that rogue, Guillaum Taafe, who had cheated him in the sale of a horse, and another as the father of that thief Shamus, who had sold him a diseased cow that died the week after. So, for the first time since he was driven out of his home, he passed the night supperless, for houses did not lie close together in that part.

Cold, hungry, houseless, and distracted with grief at what he had been and now was, nature gave way at last, and, unable to outlast the weary, bitter night, he lost his senses just before dawn, and lay motionless on the hard road.

The chances were he must die; but just at death's door his luck turned.

Lurcher put his feet over him and his chin upon his breast to guard him, as he had often guarded Garret's coat, and that kept a little warmth in his heart; and at the very dawn of day the door of a farmhouse opened, and the master came out upon his business, and saw something unusual lying in the road a good way off. So he went toward it, and found Brian Taafe in that condition. This farmer was very well-to-do, but he had known trouble, and it had made him charitable. He soon hallooed to his men, and had the old man taken in; he called his wife too, and bade her observe that it was a reverend face, though he was all in tatters. They laid him between hot blankets, and, when he came-to a bit, gave him warm drink, and at last a good meal. He recovered his spirits, and thanked them with a certain dignity.

When he was quite comfortable, and not before, they asked him his name.

"Ah, don't ask me that!" said he, piteously. "It's a bad name I have, and it used to be a good one, too. Don't ask me, or maybe you'll put me out, as the others did, for the fault of my two sons. It is hard to be turned from my own door, let alone from other honest men's doors, through the vilyins," said he.

So the farmer was kindly, and said, "Never mind your name, fill your belly."

But by and by the man went out into the yard, and then the wife could not restrain her curiosity. "Why,

good man," said she, "sure you are too decent a man to be ashamed of your name."

"I'm too decent not to be ashamed of it," said Brian. "But you are right; an honest man should tell his name though they druv him out of heaven for it. I am Brian Taafe — that was."

"Not Brian Taafe, the strong farmer at Corrans?"

"Ay, madam; I'm all that's left of him."

"Have you a son called Garret?"

"I had, then."

The woman spoke no more to him, but ran screaming to the door: "Here, Tom! Tom! come here!" cried she; "Tom! Tom!" As Lurcher, a very sympathetic dog, flew to the door and yelled and barked fiercely in support of this invocation, the hullabaloo soon brought the farmer running in.

"O Tom, asthore," cried she, "it's Mister Taafe, the father of Garret Taafe himself."

"O Lord!" cried the farmer, in equal agitation, and stared at him. "My blessing on the day you ever set foot within these doors!" Then he ran to the door and hallooed: "Hy, Murphy! Ellen! come here, ye divils!"

Lurcher supported the call with great energy. In ran a fine little boy and girl. "Look at this man with all the eyes in your body!" said he; "this is Misther Taafe, father of Garret Taafe, that saved us all from ruin and destruction entirely." He then turned to Mr. Taafe, and told him, a little more calmly, "that years ago every ha'porth they had was going to be carted for the rent, but Garret Taafe came by, put his hand in his pocket, took out thirty pounds, and cleared them in a moment. It was a way he had; we were not the only ones he saved that way, so long as he had it to give."

The old man did not hear these last words; his eyes were opened, the iron entered his soul, and he overflowed with grief and penitence.

"Och, murther! murther!" he cried. "My poor boy! what had I to do at all to go and turn you adrift, as I done, for no raison in life!" Then, with a piteous, apologetic wail, "I tuck the wrong for the right; that's the way the world is blinded. Och, Garret, Garret, what will I do with the thoughts of it? An' those two vilyins that I gave it all to, and they turned me out in my ould days, as I done you. No matther!" and he fell into a sobbing and a trembling that nearly killed him for the second time.

But the two friends of his son Garret nursed him through that, and comforted him; so he recovered. But, as he did live, he outlived those tender feelings whose mortal wounds had so nearly killed him. When he recovered this last blow he brooded and brooded, but never shed another tear.

One day, seeing him pretty well restored, as he thought, the good farmer came to him with a fat bag of gold. "Sir," said he, "soon after your son helped us, luck set in our way. Mary she had a legacy; we had a wonderful crop of flax, and with that plant 'tis kill or cure; and then I found lead in the hill, and they pay me a dale o' money for leave to mine there. I'm almost ashamed to take it. I tell you all this to show you I can afford to pay you back that thirty pounds, and if you please I'll count it out."

"No!" said Mr. Taafe, "I'll not take Garret's money; but if you will do me a favor, lend me the whole bag for a week, for at the sight of it I see a way to — Whisper."

Then, with bated breath and in strict confidence, he hinted to the farmer a scheme of vengeance. The farmer was not even to tell it to his wife; "for," said old Brian, "the very birds carry these things about; and sure it is knowing divils I have to do with, especially the women."

Next day the farmer lent him a good suit and drove

him to a quiet corner scarce a hundred yards from his old abode. The old farmer got down and left him. Lurcher walked at his master's heels. It was noon, and the sun shining bright.

The wife of Shamus Taafe came out to hang up her man's shirt to dry, when, lo! scarce thirty yards from her, she saw an old man seated, counting out gold on a broad stone at his feet. At first she thought it must be one of the good people — or fairies — or else she must be dreaming: but no! cocking her head on one side, she saw for certain the profile of Brian Taafe, and he was counting a mass of gold. She ran in and screamed her news rather than spoke it.

"Nonsense, woman!" said Shamus, roughly: "it is not in nature."

"Then go and see for yourself, man!" said she.

Shamus was not the only one to take this advice. They all stole out on tiptoe, and made a sort of semicircle of curiosity. It was no dream: there were piles and piles of gold glowing in the sun, and old Brian with a horse-pistol across his knees, and even Lurcher seemed to have his eyes steadily fixed on the glittering booty.

When they had thoroughly drunk in this most unexpected scene, they began to talk in agitated whispers; but even in talking they never looked at each other — their eyes were glued on the gold.

Said Guillaum: "Ye did very wrong, Shamus, to turn out the old father as you done; see now what we all lost by it. That's a part of the money he laid by; and we'll never see a penny of it."

The wives whispered that was a foolish thing to say: "Leave it to us," said they, "and we'll have it all one day."

This being agreed to, the women stole toward the old man, one on each side. Lurcher rose and snarled, and

old Brian hurried his gold into his ample pockets, and stood on the defensive.

"O father! and is it you come back? Oh, the Lord be praised! Oh, the weary day since you left us, and all our good-luck wid ye!"

Brian received this and similar speeches with fury and reproaches. Then they humbled themselves and wept, cursed their ill-governed tongues, and bewailed the men's folly in listening to them. They flattered him and cajoled him, and ordered their husbands to come forward and ask the old man's pardon, and not let him ever leave them again. The supple sons were all penitence and affection directly. Brian at last consented to stay, but stipulated for a certain chamber with a key to it. "For," said he, "I have got my strong-box to take care of as well as myself."

They pricked up their ears directly at mention of the strong-box, and asked where it was.

"Oh, it is not far, but I can't carry it. Give me two boys to fetch it."

"Oh, Guillaum and Shamus would carry it or anything to oblige a long-lost father!"

So they went with him to the farmer's cart and brought in the box, which was pretty large, and, above all, very full and heavy.

He was once more king of his own house, and flattered and petted as he had never been since he gave away his estate. To be sure, he fed this by mysterious hints that he had other lands besides those in that part of the country, and that, indeed, the full extent of his possessions would never be known until his will was read; which will was safely locked away in his strong-box — *with other things.*

And so he passed a pleasant time, embittered only by regrets, and very poignant they were, that he could hear

nothing of his son Garret. Lurcher also was taken great care of, and became old and lazy.

But shocks that do not kill undermine. Before he reached threescore and ten Brian Taafe's night-work and troubles told upon him, and he drew near his end. He was quite conscious of it, and announced his own departure, but not in a regretful way. He had become quite a philosopher; and indeed there was a sort of chuckle about the old fellow in speaking of his own death, which his daughters-in-law secretly denounced as unchristian, and, what was worse, unchancy.

Whenever he did mention the expected event, he was sure to say, "And mind, boys, my will is in that chest."

"Don't spake of it, father," was the reply.

When he was dying, he called for both his sons, and said, in a feeble voice, "I was a strong farmer, and come of honest folk. Ye'll give me a good wakin', boys, an' a gran' funeral?"

They promised this very heartily.

"And after the funeral ye'll all come here together and open the will, the children an' all — all but Garret. I've left him nothing, poor boy, for sure he's not in this world. I'll maybe see him where I'm goin'."

So there was a grand wake, and the virtues of the deceased and his professional importance were duly howled by an old lady who excelled in this lugubrious art. Then the funeral was hurried on, because they were in a hurry to open the chest.

The funeral was joined in the churchyard by a stranger, who muffled his face, and shed the only tears that fell upon that grave. After the funeral he stayed behind all the rest and mourned, but he joined the family at the feast which followed; and, behold! it was Garret, come a day too late. He was welcomed with exuberant affection, not being down in the will; but they did not

ask him to sleep there. They wanted to be alone, and read the will. He begged for some reminiscence of his father, and they gave him Lurcher. So he put Lurcher into his gig, and drove away to that good farmer, sure of his welcome, and praying God he might find him alive. Perhaps his brothers would not have let him go so easily had they known he had made a large fortune in America, and was going to buy quite a slice of the county.

On the way he kept talking to Lurcher, and reminding him of certain sports they had enjoyed together, and feats of poaching they had performed. Poor old Lurcher kept pricking his ears all the time, and cudgelled his memory as to the tones of the voice that was addressing him. Garret reached the farm, and was received first with stares, then with cries of joy, and was dragged into the house, so to speak. After the first ardor of welcome, he told them he had arrived only just in time to bury his father. "And this old dog," said he, "is all that's left me of him. He was mine first, but when I left he took to father. He was always a wise dog."

"We know him," said the wife; "he has been here before." And she was going to blurt it all out, but her man said, "Another time," and gave her a look as black as thunder, which wasn't his way at all, but he explained to her afterward. "They are friends, those three, over the old man's grave. We should think twice before we stir ill blood betune 'em." So when he stopped her she turned it off cleverly enough, and said the dear old dog must have his supper. Supper they gave him, and a new sheepskin to lie on by the great fire. So there he lay, and seemed to doze.

The best bed in the house was laid for Garret, and when he got up to go to it, didn't that wise old dog get up too with an effort, and move stiffly toward Garret,

and lick his hand; then he lay down again all of a piece, as who should say, "I'm very tired of it all." — "He knows me now at last," said Garret, joyfully. "That is his way of saying good-night, I suppose. He was always a wonderful wise dog."

In the morning they found Lurcher dead and stiff on the sheepskin! It was a long good-night he had bid so quietly to the friend of his youth.

Garret shed tears over him, and said, "If I had only known what he meant, I'd have sat up with him. But I never could see far. He was a deal wiser for a dog than I shall ever be for a man."

Meantime the family party assembled in the bedroom of the deceased. Every trace of feigned regret had left their faces, and all their eyes sparkled with joy and curiosity. They went to open the chest. It was locked. They hunted for the key; first quietly, then fussily. The women found it at last, sewed up in the bed; they cut it out and opened the chest.

The first thing they found was a lot of stones. They glared at them, and the color left their faces. What deviltry was this?

Presently they found writing on one stone, "Look below." Then there was a reaction, and a loud laugh. "The old fox was afraid the money and parchments would fly away, so he kept them down."

They plunged their hands in, and soon cleared out a barrowful of stones, till they came to a kind of paving-stone. They lifted this carefully out, and discovered a good new rope with a running noose, and — the will.

It was headed in large letters, finely engrossed: —

THE LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF BRIAN TAAFE.

But the body of the instrument was in the scrawl of the testator: —

"I bequeath all the stones in this box to the hearts that could turn their father and benefactor out on the highway that stormy night.

"I bequeath this rope for any father to hang himself with who is fool enough to give his property to his children before he dies."

This is a prosaic story compared with the Lear of Shakespeare, but it is well told by Gerald Griffin, who was a man of genius. Of course I claim little merit but that of setting the jewels. Were I to tell you that is an art, I suppose you would not believe it.

I have put the two stories together, not without a hope that the juxtaposition may set a few intelligent people thinking. It is very interesting, curious, and instructive to observe how differently the same events operate upon men who differ in character. And perhaps "The Two Lears" may encourage that vein of observation; its field is boundless.

DOUBLES.

We live in an age of bad English. There is a perverse preference for weak foreign to strong British phrases, and a run upon abstract terms, roundabout phrases, polysyllables, and half-scientific jargon on simple matters, like velvet trimming on a cotton print.

Addison could be content to write: "My being his nearest neighbor gave me some knowledge of his habits;" but our contemporaries must say, "The fact of my being his nearest neighbor gave me," etc. Now observe: in the first place, it is not "the fact" but "the circumstance;" and in the next, both "fact" and "circumstance" are superfluous and barbarous. Probably the schoolboys who invented this circumlocution had been told by some village schoolmaster that a verb can only be governed by a noun substantive. Pure illusion! it can be governed by a sentence with no nominative case in it, and the Addisonian form is good, elegant, classical English. All the Roman authors are full of examples; and, unless my memory fails me, the very first Latin line cited as good syntax in the old Eton grammar is, —

Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

Try your nineteenth-century grammar on this, it is a fair test: "*Factum discendi ingenuas artes emollit mores.*"

Why is this so glaringly ridiculous in Latin, yet current in English? Simply because bad English is so common, and bad Latin never was.

To die is landing on some distant shore.

This line of Garth's turned into nineteenth-century English would be, "The fact of dying is identical with landing on some distant shore."

If I could scourge that imbecile phrase, "the fact of," out of England, I should be no slight benefactor to our mother-tongue. I may return one day to the other vices of English I have indicated above. At present I will simply remark that what I call "doubles," the writers of the new English call "*cases of mistaken identity.*" Phœbus! what a mouthful! This is a happy combination of the current vices.

1. Here is a term dragged out of philosophy to do vulgar work.

2. It is wedded to an adjective which cannot co-exist with it. You may mistake a man for A, or you may identify him with A. But you cannot do both; for if you mistake, you do not identify; and if you identify, you do not mistake.

3. Here are ten syllables set to do the work of two. Now, in every other art and science, economy of time and space is the great object; only the English of the day aims at *parvum in multo.* But, thank Heaven, good old "double" is not dead yet, though poisoned with exotics and smothered under polysyllables.

There are always many persons on the great globe who seem like other persons in feature when the two are not confronted; but, setting aside twins, it is rare that out of the world's vast population any two cross each other's path so like one another as to bear comparison. Where comparison is impossible, the chances are that the word

"double" is applied without reason. Sham doubles are prodigiously common. My note-books are full of them. Take two examples out of many. Two women examine a corpse carefully, and each claims it as her husband. It is interred, and by and by both husbands walk into their wives' houses alive and — need I say — impenitent. A wife has a man summoned for deserting her. Another woman identifies him in the police-court as her truant husband. This looks ugly, and the man is detained. Two more wives come in and swear to him. A pleasing excitement pervades the district. Our lady novelists had kept to the trite path of bigamy; but truth, more fertile, was going to indulge us with a quadrigamy. Alas! the quadrigamist brought indisputable evidence that he had been a public officer in India at the date of all the four marriages, and had never known one of these four injured females, with the infallible eyes cant assigns to that sex.

Sometimes the sham double passes current by beguiling the ears in a matter where the eyes, if left to themselves, would not have been deceived. The most remarkable cases on record of this are the false Martin Guerre and the sham Tichborne. A short comparison of these two cases may serve to clear the way to my story.

Fifteenth century: Martin Guerre, a small peasant proprietor in the south of France, and a newly married man, left his wife and went soldiering, and never sent her a line in eight years. Then came a man, who, like Martin, had a mole on his cheek-bone and similar features, only he had a long beard and mustache. He said things to the wife and sister of Martin Guerre which no stranger could have said, and, indeed, reminded the wife of some remark she had made to him in the privacy of their wedding-night. He took his place as her husband, and she had children by him. But her uncle had always doubted, and when the children came to divert the inheritance

from his own offspring, he took action and accused the new-comer of fraud. It came to trial; there was a prodigious number of respectable witnesses on either side; but the accused was about to carry it, when stump, stump, stump, came an ominous wooden leg into the court, and there stood the real Martin Guerre, crippled in the wars! The supposed likeness disappeared all but the mole, and the truth was revealed. The two Martins had been soldiers, and drunk together in Flanders, and Martin had told his knavish friend a number of little things. With these the impostor had come and beguiled the ears, and so prejudiced the eyes. French law was always severe. They hanged him in front of the real man's door.

Orton's case had the same feature. His witnesses saw by the ear. He began by pumping a woman who wanted to be deceived, and from her and one or two more he obtained information with which he dealt adroitly, and so made the long ears of weak people prejudice their eyes. As for his supposed likeness to Tichborne, that went not on clean observation, but on wild calculation. "If Martin Guerre, whom you knew beardless, had grown a long beard, don't you think he would be like this?"

"Yes, I do; for there's his mole, and he knew things none but Martin Guerre could."

"If Roger Tichborne, whom you knew as thin as a lath, had become as fat as a porpoise, don't you think he would be like this man?"

"Yes, I do; for his eyes twitch like Roger's, and he knows some things Roger knew."

Eleven independent coincidences prove the claimant to be Arthur Orton; and three such coincidences have never failed to hang a man accused of murder. But that does not affect the question as to whether he was like Tichborne. There is, however, no reason whatever to

believe that he was a bit like him. In the first place, it is not in the power of any man to divine how a very lean man would look were he to turn very fat in the face; and, in the next place, the fat was granted contrary to experience — for it is only a plump young man who gets fat at thirty; a lean man at twenty-one is never a porpoise till turned forty. To conclude, this is no case of doubles, but the shallowest imposture recorded in all history; and the fools who took a fat living snob, with a will of iron, for a lean dead aristocrat, with a will of wax, have only to thank their long ears for it: no downright delusive appearance ever met their eyes.

A much nearer approach to a double occurred almost under my eyes.

A certain laughter-loving dame, the delight of all who knew her, vanished suddenly from her father's house, where she was visiting. Maternal tenderness took the alarm, emissaries searched the town north, south, east, and west, and a young lady was found drowned, and immediately recognized as my sprightly friend. Her father came and recognized her too. In his anguish he asked leave to pray with her alone; and it was only in the act of prayer that his eye fell upon some small thing that caused a doubt; but examining her hair and forehead more narrowly, he found the drowned girl was not his child.

As for her, poor girl, she was young, and had dashed off to Brighton in very good company, and, like the rest of her prodigious sex, had grudged a shilling for a telegram, though she would have given all she had in the world rather than cause her parents so serious an alarm.

Even in this case calculation enters: the drowned girl, when alive, may not have looked so like my laugh-

ter-loving friend. Still, we must allow them doubles, or very near it.

Having thus narrowed the subject, I will now give the reader the most curious case of doubles my reading, though somewhat rich in such matters, furnishes:

The great Molière married Armande Bejart, a sprightly actress of his company. She was a fascinating coquette, and gave him many a sore heart. But the public profits by a poet's torments; wound him, he bleeds not ephemeral blood, but immortal ichor — thoughts that breathe, and words that burn, and characters that are types more enduring than brass. The great master has given us, in a famous dialogue, the defects and charms of the woman he had the misfortune to love. This passage, in which a disinterested speaker runs her down and a lover defends her, is charming; and the interlocutors are really the great observer's judgment and his heart. The contest ends, as might be expected, in the victory of the heart.

Covielle, *alias* Molière's judgment: "But you must own she is the most capricious creature upon earth."

Cléonté, *alias* Molière's heart: "Oui, elle est capricieuse, j'en demeure d'accord; mais tout sied bien aux belles; on souffre tout des belles." — *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, Act III., Scene IX.

But Armande Bejart entered more deeply into Molière's mind, and but for her the immortal Célimène — a character it will take the world two hundred years more to estimate at its full value — would never have seen the light. Célimène is a born coquette, but with a world of good-sense and keen wit, and not a bad heart, but an untruthful — a pernicious woman, not a bad one. She has an estimable lover, and she esteems him; but she cannot do without two butterfly admirers, whom she fascinates and deceives. They detect her,

and expose her insolently. She treats them with calm contempt. Only to the worthy man she has slighted she hangs her head with gentle and even pathetic penitence. She offers to marry him; but when he makes a condition that would render infidelity impossible, her courage fails, and she declines, yet not vulgarly. This true woman, with all her suppleness, ingenuity, and marvellous powers of fence, whether she has to parry the just remonstrances of her worthy lover, or soothe the vanity of her butterfly dupes, or pass a polished rapier through the body of a female friend who comes to her with hypocrisy and envenomed blandishments, is Armande Bejart. That is one reason why I give a niche in my collection to a strange adventure that befell her after the great heart she so played with had ceased to beat, and the great head that created Célimène had ceased to ache. The widow Molière, after her husband's death, carried on her gallantries with greater freedom, but in an independent spirit, for she remained on the stage, a public favorite; and her lovers, though not restricted as to number, must please her eye. She does not appear to have been accessible to mere ignoble interests. Monsieur Lescot, a person of some importance, president of the Parliament of Grenoble, saw her repeatedly on the stage, and was deeply smitten with her. He had heard it whispered that she was not quite a vestal, and he resolved to gratify his fancy if he could. In those days the stage at night was a promenade open to any gentleman of fashion; but President Lescot did not care to push in among the crowd of beaux and actors, so he consulted a lady who had been useful to many distressed gentlemen in similar cases. This Madame Ledoux had a very large acquaintance with persons of both sexes; and such was her benevolence, that she would take some pains, and even exert some ingenuity,

to sweep obstacles out of the path of love, and bring agreeable people together. She undertook to sound Mademoiselle Molière, as the gay widow was called, and, if possible, to obtain Monsieur Lescot an interview.

After some days she told Lescot that the lady would go so far as to pay her a visit at a certain time, and he could take this opportunity of dropping in and paying his addresses.

He came, and found a young lady whose quiet appearance rather surprised him. La Molière on the stage was celebrated for the magnificence of her costumes; but here she was dressed with singular modesty. He had a delightful conversation with her, and one that rather surprised him. She was bitter against the theatre, its annoyances, and mortifications, and confessed she felt not altogether unwilling to make a respectable acquaintance who had nothing to do with it.

In the next interview Lescot was urgent and the lady coy; nevertheless, she held out hopes, provided he would submit to certain positive conditions. Lescot agreed, and expected that a settlement of some kind would be required.

Nothing of the sort. What she demanded, and upon his word of honor, was that he would never come after her to the theatre, nor indeed, speak to her in public, but only at the house of their mutual friend, Madame Ledoux. The condition was curious, but not sordid. President Lescot accepted it, and very tender relations ensued. Lescot was in paradise, and Madame Ledoux took advantage of that to bleed him very freely; but his inamorata herself showed no such spirit. She threw out no hints of the kind, and the most valuable present she accepted from him was a gold necklace he bought for her on the Quai des Orfévres. She assured him, too, that the intrigues ascribed to her were utterly false, and

that what most attracted her in him was his being in every way unlike her theatrical comrades — a man of position, and a friend apart, with whom she could forget the turmoil of her daily existence and the stale compliments of the coxcombs who throng the theatre.

At this time the works of Thomas Corneille, nephew of the great dramatist, had a vogue which has now entirely deserted them. His "Circe" was produced, and Mademoiselle Molière played the leading part, and astonished the town by the splendor and extravagance of her dresses. Lescot saw her from his box and admired her, and applauded her furiously, and with raptures of exultation, to think that this brilliant creature belonged to him in secret, and came to him dressed like a nun. But this new *éclat* set tongues talking, and Lescot listened and inquired. He learned on good authority that La Molière had two lovers — one a man of fortune, M. Du Boulay, and another an actor, called Guérin, whose affections she had stolen from an actress of the same company. *Item* — that Du Boulay had offered her marriage, but finding her incapable of fidelity, had retired, and at present she was on discreditable terms with the actor in question.

Lescot, who was now tenderly attached to his fascinating visitor, put her on her defence, addressed the bitterest reproaches to her, and lamented his own misfortune in having listened to her perfidious tongue, and bestowed a constant heart upon a double-faced coquette. She seemed surprised and alarmed; but recovering herself, used all her address to calm him. She shed many tears, and declared she loved no one but him, and had kept him out of the theatre for this very reason — that it was, and always had been, a temple of lies and odious calumnies. Lescot was half appeased, but, his jealousy being excited, demanded more frequent interviews. She

consented readily, made a solemn appointment for next day, and took good care not to come.

This breach of faith revived all Lescot's jealousy, and after waiting for her, and raging and storming for two hours, he could bear his jealous doubts and fears no longer, but broke his word and went straight to the theatre. As any gentleman could sit on the stage during the performance, President Lescot claimed that right, and sat down upon a stool during the performance of "Circe." In this situation, being only one of many gentlemen there, and under the public eye, he managed to restrain himself, though greatly agitated, and at first contented himself with watching to see her start at the sight of him. She did not seem to notice him, however; to be sure, she was warm in her part. At last it so happened that she walked past him with that grand reposeful slowness which is, and always was, one of a graceful actress's most majestic charms. He seized that opportunity. "You are more beautiful than ever," he said, quite audibly; "and if I was not in love with you already, I should be now."

Whether La Molière was warm in her part and did not hear, or was used to these asides, she paid no attention whatever.

That piqued the distinguished member of Parliament, and he sat sullen till the play ended. Then he was on the alert, and followed La Molière so sharply that he entered her dressing-room at her heel. Her maid requested him to leave. He stood firm, and requested the maid to retire, as he had something particular to say to mademoiselle. Mademoiselle wanted to remove the glorious but heavy trappings of tragedy, so she said, rather sharply, "Say it, then, sir. I do not think there can be any secrets between you and me."

"Very well, madame," said Lescot, bitterly: "then

what I have to say is that your conduct is unjustifiable."

"What cause of displeasure have I given you?"

"You made an appointment with me; I keep it, you break it. I come here, disheartened and unhappy, to learn the reason, and you receive me like a criminal."

"The man is mad!" said La Molière, and eyed him with a look of haughty disdain that would have crushed him had he been less sure right was on his side. As it was, though it staggered him, it provoked him more. He confronted her with equal *hauteur*, and cried out, "You had better say you do not know me."

Thus challenged, and being aware she knew a great many gentlemen, she looked at him hard and full, not to make a mistake, then she said, "I don't even know your name!"

Lescot put his hand to his heart, and was wounded to the quick. "What!" he cried, "after all that has passed between us! Why, you must be the basest of God's creatures to use me so!"

"Ah!" cried La Molière. "Jeannette, call some people to turn this man out of the place."

"By all means," cried the other. "Call all Paris to hear me give this woman her true character before I leave the place."

"Ruffian, you shall smart for this insolence!" said La Molière, grinding her white teeth.

By this time two or three actors and a dozen actresses had come running and half dressed. The disputants being French, both spoke at once, and at the top of their voices; La Molière declaring this ruffian a perfect stranger to her, who had burst into her dressing-room, and outraged her with the grossest calumnies, the very meaning of which was an enigma to her, and Lescot relating all the particulars of his secret intrigue with

her. Detail convinces, and La Molière had the mortification to see by the sniggering of the actresses, who knew her real character, that they believed the gentleman and not her.

"Why, look!" cried he, suddenly; "the ungrateful creature has a necklace on I gave her. I bought it for her on the Quai des Orfévres."

This was too much. La Molière, red as fury, and her eyes darting flame, sprung at him with her right hand lifted to give him such a box on the ear as she had never yet administered on the stage; but he had the address to seize her wrist with his left hand, and with his right he tore the necklace off her neck and dashed it to the ground.

Then La Molière called the guard; and as personal violence is always severely treated in France, the president of the Parliament of Grenoble cooled his heels in prison that night.

Next morning the President Lescot was released on bail, after a short hearing, in which he declared loudly that he had a perfect right to expose a courtesan, whose lover he was, and who had the effrontery to say publicly she did not know him. "That right," said he, "I am prepared to maintain in any tribunal."

He held the same language in society; and, on the whole, the world took his part in the matter.

Supposing the allegation to be false, La Molière had her proper remedy. She had only to proceed against Lescot for violence and slander.

She hesitated, and this confirmed the public opinion. It spread to the theatrical audiences, and the favorite actress began to be received with sneers and chuckles, or ominous silence.

She was alarmed, and went to an old actress called Châteauneuf, who had a long head, and had often advised her in matters of intrigue.

La Châteauneuf said the case was plain. She must take proceedings.

"Nay, but I dare not," said La Molière. "They will search into my whole life."

The older fox laughed, but said, "Never mind that, child. You are innocent for once; that is an accident you must put to profit, and so throw a doubt on your real indiscretions. Commence proceedings at once. You are ruined if you submit."

The young fox listened to the old fox with the respect due to our seniors, and laid a criminal information against Lescot.

He stood firm as a rock, persisted in his statements, and brought a very ugly witness, the goldsmith from the Quai des Orfévres. This trader swore to La Molière's necklace as one he had sold, and to her as the lady who was with Lescot when he sold it.

This evidence was fatal to the accuser, both in the court and with the public. But when Lescot went after Madame Ledoux, to complete his defence, she was not to be found. He let this out, and that he had relied on her. The accuser's agent then smelled a rat, and set the police on to find Ledoux.

Meantime, La Molière was the butt of Paris.

But the police succeeded in finding Ledoux, and her examination put a new face on the matter. Ledoux confessed that Monsieur Lescot, being madly enamoured of Mademoiselle Molière, had asked her assistance; that she, not caring to meddle with an intrigue of that kind, had introduced to him a young lady who perfectly resembled Mademoiselle Molière. This young lady, she said, had for maiden name Marie Simonnet, but called herself the widow of a Monsieur Harvé de la Tourelle, a gentleman of Brittany.

On this hint the accuser searched for the young lady

in question. They soon found traces of her, and that she was called by her friends "La Tourelle."

La Tourelle had disappeared. "And never will appear, being a phantom," said Lescot. "Was ever so audacious a figment? as if one woman could have the face, the figure, the manners, the cough, and the necklace of another!"

Well, the officers of justice caught La Tourelle in the suburbs of Paris, and were astonished at the resemblance.

She was confronted with Mademoiselle Molière in the judge's room, in presence of Ledoux and the President Lescot.

The ladies faced each other like two young stags ready to butt each other. The injured Molière folded her arms grandly, and cocked her nose high, and would fain have looked the other down as a criminal. But the other jade saw she was the younger of the two, and wore a demure air of defiant complacency.

But, setting aside fleeting expression, they were literally one in stature, form and feature. If each had looked into a mirror, she would have seen the hussy that now faced her.

Amazement painted itself on every face; most of all on Lescot's.

Ledoux persisted in her confession; and both she and La Tourelle were imprisoned, to await the trial.

Lescot now found himself in the wrong box; and it became very important to him that the trial should never come off. With this view he exerted all his influence to bail La Tourelle, meaning, no doubt, to forfeit his recognizances and send her out of the country. But the judges would accept no bail, and the day of trial was fixed.

Then Lescot bribed the jailer; and he showed La Tourelle how to make her escape in a very ingenious

way, that had never occurred to the lady, whose genius, like that of many other ladies, was mainly confined to matters of love and intrigue.

Lescot sent her away into the depths of Dauphiné, and her absence suspended that trial.

But La Molière's blood was up, and she appealed personally to men in power, and used all her charms and all her arts.

The result was a new process, under which not one of those who had offended her escaped.

The President Lescot was condemned to stand at the bar, and read a paper in presence of La Molière and four witnesses, to be by her chosen: —

"I, François Lescot, admit and declare that I, by recklessness and mistake, have used violence against Mademoiselle Molière, here present, and slandered her foully, but without malice of heart, having taken her for another person."

He was also fined two hundred francs.

By the same judgment the women Ledoux and La Tourelle had to pay a fine of twenty francs each to the king, one hundred francs each to La Moliere, and to be whipped, naked, before the gate of the Châtelet, and also before the house of Mademoiselle Molière.

Lescot made his *amende honorable*, and paid his fine. Ledoux paid her fine, and was whipped before the Châtelet and before La Molière's windows; but La Tourelle was more fortunate. Nature has her freaks; she profited by one of them. Lescot, who had now compared in many ways the hussy he adored with the jade who had personated her, was as much enamoured as ever, if not more; but, by Jupiter! it was not the actress but her double he was now in love with. He joined her in Dauphiné, and rewarded her with a life-long attachment, which she is believed to have shared.

La Molière, as her foxy adviser had prophesied, was wonderfully re-established in character. Men said, "And, no doubt, she was always calumniated." The judgment of the Châtelet operated as a certificate of her good morals.

The goldsmith's evidence is accounted for thus: There were no jewels to the necklace. A number of gold necklaces had been made on one pattern. The goldsmith swore to La Molière's because he saw the lady, as he thought.

While the affair was yet warm the tragi-comedy of Thomas Corneille, called "L'Inconnu," was produced. La Molière was the countess, and in the play a gypsy looked at her hand, and spoke these lines: —

Cette ligne, qui croisse avec celle de vie,
Marque pour votre gloire un moment très fatal;
Sur des traits ressemblants on en parlera mal,
Et vous aurez une copie.
N'en prenez pas trop de chagrin:
Si votre gaillarde figure
Contre vous, quelque temps, cause un fâcheux murmure,
Un *tour de ville* y mettra fin,
Et vous rirez de l'aventure.

The public, always quick to fit fiction to reality, seized on these verses at once and applied them to the recent event, and showed their sympathy with the actress by storms of applause.

The favorite, her popularity embellished by a *coup de maître*, now married her actor — and continued her gallantries.

But Célimène, at bottom, lacked neither judgment nor heart. Hence I am able to conclude with a good and touching trait. On the anniversary of Molière's death, which befell in winter, she always collected the poor

round his grave, and there bestowed charity on them, and lighted great fires to warm them as they ate the food she bestowed without stint upon them at that great master's tomb.

Poor Célimène. Adieu!

THE KNIGHT'S SECRET.

THOMAS ERPINGHAM was knighted by Henry the Fourth for good and valiant service.

This Sir Thomas Erpingham, Knight of the Garter, afterward fought by the side of Henry the Fifth in his French wars, and was made Warden of the Cinque Ports, but retired to Norwich, his native place. He married a beautiful, pious lady, and after a turbulent career and the horrors of war, desired to end his days in charity. Being wealthy, and of one mind, he and Lady Erpingham built a goodly church in the city, and also erected and endowed a religious house for twelve monks and a prior, close to the knight's house and parted only by a high wall.

But though the retired soldier wished to be at peace with all men, two of his friars were of another mind. Friar John and Friar Richard hated each other, and could by no means be reconciled; neither had ever a good word for t'other; and at last Friar John gave Friar Richard a fair excuse for his invectives. Lady Erpingham came ever to matins in the convent, and Friar John would always await her coming, and attend her through the cloister, with ducks and cringes and open adulation; whereat she smiled, being in truth a most innocent lady, affable to all, and slow to think ill of any man.

But Richard denounced John as a licentious monk, and some watched and whispered; others rebuked Richard; for it was against the monastic rule to put an ill construction where the matter might be innocent.

But Richard stood his ground; and, unfortunately, Richard was right. Misunderstanding the lady's courtesy and charity, Brother John thought his fawning advances were encouraged; and this bred in him such impudence that one day he sent her a fulsome love-letter, and had the hardihood to beg for a private interview.

The lady, when she opened this letter, could hardly believe her senses; and at last, as gentlewomen will be both unsuspicious and suspicious in the wrong place, she made up her mind that the poor, good, ridiculous friar could never have been so wicked as to write this; nay, but it was her husband's doing, and a trial of her virtue; he was older than herself, and great love is oft tainted with jealousy.

This brought tears into her eyes, to think she should be doubted; but soon anger dried them, and she took occasion to put the letter suddenly into Sir Thomas's hand, and fixed her eyes on him so keenly that, if there had been a flaw in his conjugal armor, no doubt those eyes had pierced it.

The knight read the letter, and turned black and white with rage; his eyes sparkled with fury, and he looked so fearful that the lady was very sorry she had shown him the letter, and begged him not to take a madman's folly to heart.

"Not take it to heart," said he. "What! these beggarly shavelings that I have housed and fed, and so lessened my estate and thine — they shall corrupt thee, and rob me of my one earthly treasure? Sit thou down and write."

"Write, Thomas! what? — to whom?"

"Do as I bid thee, dame," said he, sternly, "and no more words."

Those were days when husbands commanded and wives obeyed; so she sat down trembling, and took the pen.

Then he made her write a letter back to the friar, and say she compassionated his love, and her husband was to ride toward London that night, and her servant, on whom she could depend, should admit him to her by a side-door of the house.

Friar John, at the appointed time, took care to be in the town, for he knew the lay brother who kept the gate of the priory would not let him out so late. He came to the side-door, and was admitted by a servant of the knight, a reckless old soldier, who cared for neither man nor devil, as the saying is, but only for his master. This man took him into a room and left him, then went for the knight: he was not far off. Now the unlucky monk, being come to the conquest of a beautiful lady, as he vainly thought, had fine linen on, and perfumed like a civet. The knight smelled these perfumes, and rushed in upon him with his man, like dogs upon the odoriferous fox, and, in a fury, without giving him time to call for help, or to say one prayer, strangled him and left him dead.

But death breeds calm; the knight's rage abated that moment, and he saw he had done a foul and remorseless deed. He would have given half his estate to bring the offender back to life. Half his estate? His whole estate, ay, and his life, were now gone from him: they were forfeited to the law. So did he pass from rage to remorse, and from remorse to fear. The rough soldier, seeing him so stricken, made light of all except the danger of discovery. "Come, noble sir," said he, "let

us bestir ourselves and take him back to the priory, and there bestow him; so shall we ne'er be known in it."

Thus urged, the knight roused himself, and he and his man brought the body out, and got it as far as the wall that did part the house from the monastery. Here they were puzzled awhile, but the man remembered a short ladder in the back yard that was high enough for this job. So they set the ladder, and, with much ado, got the body up it, and then drew the ladder up and set it again on the other side, and so, with infinite trouble, the soldier got him into the priory.

The next thing was to make it appear Friar John had died a natural death. Accordingly, he set him up on a rickety chair he found in the yard, balanced him, and left him; mounted the wall again, let himself down, and then dropped into the knight's premises.

He found the knight walking in great perturbation, and they went into the house.

"Now, good master," said this stout soldier, "go you to bed, and think no more on't."

"To bed," groaned the knight in agony. "Why should I go there? I cannot sleep. Methinks I shall never sleep again!"

"Then give me the cellar-key, good sir. I'll draw a stoup of Canary."

"Ay, wine!" said the knight; "for my blood runs cold in my veins."

The servant lighted a rousing fire in the dining-hall, and warmed and spiced some generous wine, after the fashion of the day, and there sat these two over the fire, awaiting daylight and its revelations.

But, meantime, the night was fruitful in events. The prior, informed of Friar Richard's uncharitable interpretations, had condemned him to vigil and prayer on the bare pebbles of the yard, from midnight until

three of the clock. But the sly Richard, at dusk, had conveyed a chair into the yard, to keep his knees off the cold, hard stones.

At midnight, when he came to his enforced devotions, lo, there sat a figure in the chair! He started, and took it for the prior, seated there to lecture him for luxury; but, peeping, he soon discovered it was Friar John.

He walked round and round him, talking at him. "Is it Brother John or Brother Richard who is to keep vigil to-night? I know but one friar in all this house would sit star-gazing in his brother's chair, when that brother wants it to pray in," etc.

Brother John vouchsafed no reply; and this stung Brother Richard, and he burned for revenge. "So be it then," said he; "since my place is taken, I will tell the prior, and keep vigil some other night." With this he retired, and slammed a door. But having thus disarmed, as he conceived, Brother John's suspicions, he took up an enormous pebble, and slipped back on tiptoe, and getting near the angle of a wall, he flung his great pebble at Brother John, and slipped hastily behind the wall; nevertheless, as he hid, he had the satisfaction of seeing his pebble, which weighed about a stone, strike Brother John on the nape of the neck, and then there was a lumping noise and a great clatter, and Friar Richard chuckled with pride and delight at the success of his throw. However, he waited some minutes before he emerged, and then walked briskly out, like a new-comer. There lay John flat, and the chair upset. Brother Richard ran to him, charged with hypocritical sympathy, and found his enemy's face very white. He got alarmed, and felt his heart: he was stone-dead!

The poor monk, whose hatred was of a mere feminine sort, and had never been deadly, was seized with remorse, and he beat his breast, and prayed in earnest, instead of

repeating Pater-nosters — "*preces sine mente dictas,*" as the great Erasmus calls them.

But other feelings soon succeeded: his enmity to the deceased was well known, and this would be called murder, if the body was found in that yard, and his own life would pay the forfeit.

Casting his eyes round for a place where he might hide the body, he saw a ladder standing against the wall. This surprised him; but he was in no condition to puzzle over small riddles. Terror gave him force: he lifted the body, crawled up the ladder, and placed the body on the wall — it was wider than they build now; then he drew up the ladder, set it on the other side, and took his ghastly load down safely. Then, being naturally cunning, and having his neck to save, he went and hid the ladder, took up the body, staggered with it as far as the porch of the knight's house, and set it there bolt upright against one of the pillars.

As he carried it out of the yard he heard a window in the knight's house open. He could not see where the window was, nor whether he was watched and recognized; but he feared the worst, and such was his terror he resolved to fly the place and bury himself in some distant monastery under another name.

But how? He was lame, and could not go ten miles in a day, whereas a hundred miles was little enough to make him secure.

After homicide theft is no great matter. He resolved to borrow the maltster's mare, and turn her adrift when she had carried him beyond the hue and cry. So he went and knocked up the maltster, and told him the convent wanted flour, and he was to go betimes to the miller for a sack thereof. Now the convent was a good customer to the maltster, so he lent Friar Richard the mare at a word, and told him where to find the saddle and bridle.

Richard fed the mare for a journey and saddled her; then he mounted and rode at a foot pace past the convent, meaning to go quietly through the town, making no stir, then away like the wind.

But as he paced by the knight's house he cast a look askance to see if that ghastly object still sat in the porch.

No: the porch was empty.

What might that mean? Had he come to life? Had the murder been discovered? He began to wonder and tremble.

While he was in this mood there was a great clatter behind him of horses' feet and clashing armor, and he felt he was pursued.

The knight and his man sat together, drinking hot spiced wine, and awaiting daylight. The knight would not go to bed, yet he wanted a change. "Will daylight never come?" said he.

"'Twill be here anon," said the soldier; "in half an hour."

The knight said no, it would never come.

The soldier said he would go and look at the sky, and tell him for certain.

"Be not long away," said the knight, with a shiver, "or the dead friar will be taking thy place here and pledging me."

"Stuff!" said the soldier: "he'll never trouble you more."

With this he marched out to consult the night, and almost ran against the dead friar seated in the porch, white and glaring. This was too much even for the iron soldier: he uttered a sharp yell, staggered back, and burst into the room, gasping for breath. He got close to his master, and stammered out, "The dead man!—

sitting in the porch!" — and crossed himself energetically, the first time these thirty years.

The knight stared and trembled; and so they drew close together, with their eyes over their shoulders.

"Wine!" cried the knight.

"Ay," said the soldier, "but I go not alone. He'll be squatting on the cask else."

So they went together to the cellar, often looking round, and fetching two bottles.

They drank them out, and the good wine, falling upon more of the sort, made them madder and bolder. They rolled along, holding on by one another, to the porch, and there they stood and looked at the dead friar, and shuddered.

But the soldier swore a great oath, and vowed he should not stay there to get them hanged. Thereupon a furious fit of recklessness succeeded to their terror: they got a suit of rusty armor and fastened it on the body; then they saddled an old war-horse that was kept in the stable only as a reminiscence, and tied the friar's body on to him with many cords; they opened the stable-door and so pricked the old war-horse with their daggers that he clattered out into the road with a bound and a great rattling of rusty armor.

Now, as ill-luck would have it, Friar Richard and his borrowed mare were pacing demurely through the town, scarce fifty yards ahead. The old horse nosed the mare, and, being left to choose his road, took very naturally after her; but when he got near her the monk looked round and saw the ghastly rider. He gave a yell so piercing it waked the whole street, and, for lack of spurs, drove his bare heels into the mare's side. She cantered down the street at an easy pace, the fearful pageant cantered after, the friar kept turning and

yelling, and the windows kept opening and heads popped out to see, and by and by doors opened and a few early risers joined in the pursuit, wondering and curious.

The cavalcade never cleared the town of Norwich; the friar, in the blindness of despair, turned his mare up what seemed to him an open lane; but there was no exit. His dead pursuer came up with him, and he threw himself off, and cried, "Mercy! mercy! *mea culpa!* — I confess it! I confess it! only take that horrible face from me." And in his despair he owned that he had slain Brother John.

Then some led the horse and his ghastly load away, and wondered sore; but others hauled Friar Richard to justice; and he, believing it was a miracle, and Heaven's hand upon him, persisted in his confession, and was cast into prison to abide his trial.

He had not to wait long. In those days the law did not tarry for judges of assize to come round the country now and then. Each town had its mayor and its aldermen, any one of whom could try and hang a man if need was. So Friar Richard was tried next week.

By this time he had somewhat recovered his spirits and his love of life: he defended himself, and said that indeed he had slain his brother, but it was by misadventure; he had thrown a stone at him in some anger, but not to do him deadly harm. This he said with many tears. But, on the other hand, it was proved that he had long hated Brother John; that he had got out of the priory without passing the door, and had borrowed the maltster's mare on a false pretence; and finally, marks of strangulation had been found on the dead man's throat. All this amazed and overpowered the poor friar; and although his terror at the apparition was not easy to be reconciled with his having been the person who tied the body on the horse, and though one

alderman, shrewder than the rest, said he thought a great deal lay behind that, yet, upon the whole, it was thought the safest and most usual course to hang him. So he was condemned to die in three days' time.

The friar, seeing his end so near, struggled no more against his fate. He sent for the prior to confess him, and told the truth with deep sorrow and humility. "*Mea culpa! mea culpa!*" he cried. "If I had not hated my brother and broken our rule, then this had not come upon me!"

Then the prior gave him full absolution, and went away exceeding sorrowful, and doubting the wisdom and justice of laymen, and in particular of those who were about to hang Brother Richard for wilful murder. This preyed upon his mind, and he went to Sir Thomas Erpingham to utter his misgivings, and pray the good knight to work upon the sheriff, who was his friend, for a respite until the matter could be looked into more closely.

The knight was not at home, but my lady saw the prior, and learned his errand. "Alas, good father," said she, "Sir Thomas is not here; he is gone to London this two days."

The prior went home sick at heart.

Even so long ago as this they hung from Norwich Castle. So the rude gallows was put up at seven o'clock, and at eight Brother Richard must hang and turn in the wind like a weather-cock.

But before that fatal hour a King's messenger galloped into the city and spurred into the courtyard of the castle. Very soon the sheriff was reading a parchment signed by the King's own hand: the gallows was taken down, and the people dispersed by degrees. Some felt ill-used. They thought appointments should be kept, or else not made.

At night, Friar Richard, not reprieved, but, to the amazement of smaller functionaries, freely pardoned by his sovereign, in a handwriting a housemaid of this day would blush for, but with a glorious seal the size of an apple-fritter, crept forth into the night; and, gliding along the streets with his head down, slipped into the priory, and was lost to the world for many a long day. Indeed, he was confined to his cell for a month by order of the prior, and ordered to pray thrice a day for the soul of Brother John.

When Brother Richard emerged from his cell he was a changed man. He had gathered amid the thorns of tribulation the wholesome fruit of humility and the immortal flower of charity. Henceforth, no bitter word ever fell from his lips, though for a time he had many provocations; and "*Honi soit qui mal y pense*" was the rule of his heart. He had made himself of little account, and outlived all enmities. He lived much in his cell, and prayed so often for the soul of Brother John, that at last he got to love him dead whom he had hated living.

Time rolled on. The knight's hair turned gray, and the good prior died.

Then there was a great commotion in the little priory, and three or four of the leading friars each hoped to be prior.

That appointment lay with Sir Thomas Erpingham. He attended the funeral of the late prior, and then desired the sub-prior to convene the monks. "Good brothers," said he, "your prior is Brother Richard. I pray you to invest him forthwith, and yield him due love and obedience."

The knight retired, and the monks stared at each other awhile, and then obeyed, since there was no help for it; they invested Brother Richard in due form; and

such is the magic of station that, in one moment, they began to look on him with different eyes.

The new prior bore his dignity so meekly that he disarmed all hostility. His great rule of life was still, "*Honi soit qui mal y pense,*" and there is no course more apt to conciliate respect and good-will. The knight showed him favor and esteem; the monks learned to respect, and by and by to revere him; but he never ceased to reproach himself, and say masses for the soul of Brother John.

The years rolled on. The knight's gray hair turned white; and one day he sent for the prior, and said to him, "Good father, I have grave matter to entertain you withal."

"Speak, worshipful sir," said the prior.

The knight looked at him awhile, but seemed ill at ease, and as one that hath resolved to speak, but is loath to begin. At last he said, "Sir, there be men that waste their goods in sin, or meanly hoard them till their last hour, yet leave them freely to Mother Church after their death, when they can no longer enjoy them. Others there be whose breasts are laden with a secret crime they ought to confess, and clear some worthy man suspected falsely; yet they will not tell till they come to die. Methinks this is to be charitable too late; and just when justice can neither cost a man aught nor profit his neighbor. Therefore, not to be one of these, I will reveal to you now a deed that sits heavy on my conscience."

"You would confess to me, my son?"

"As man to man, sir, but not as penitent to his confessor, for that were no merit in me; it would be no more than bury my secret in a fleshly grave. Nay, what I tell to you, you shall tell to all the world, if good may come of it."

Here the knight sighed, and seemed much distem-

pered, like one who wrestleth with himself. Then he cast about how he should begin; and to conclude he opened the matter thus: "Sir, please you read that letter; it was writ by Brother John unto my wife."

The prior read it, but said never a word.

"Sir," said the knight, "do you remember a sad time when you lay in Norwich jail accused of murder, and cast for death?"

"I do remember it well, sir, and the uncharitable heart that brought me to that pass."

"While you lay there, sir, something befell elsewhere, which I will hide no longer from you. The King being at his palace in London, a knight who had fought by his side in France, sought an audience in private. It was granted him at once. Then the knight fell on his knees to the King, and begged that his life and lands might be spared, though he had slain a man in heat of blood. The King was grave but gentle, and then I showed him that letter, and owned the truth, that I and my servant, in our fury, had strangled that hapless monk."

"Alas! sir, did you take my guilt upon yourself to save my life, so fully forfeit? 'Twas I who hated him; 'twas I who flung the stone" —

"At a dead body! I tell thee, man, we strangled him, and set his body up where you saw it: hand in his death you had none."

The prior uttered a strange cry, and was silent. The knight continued, in a low voice, —

"We set him in the yard; and when we found him in the porch, being half mad with terror and drink together, we bound him on the horse and launched him. All this I told the King, and he, considering the provocation, and pitying too much his old companion in arms, gave me my life and lands, and gave me thine, which, indeed, was but bare justice. So now, sir, you know that you are innocent of bloodshed, and 'tis I am guilty."

The knight looked at the churchman, and thought to see him break forth into thanksgivings. But it was not so. The prior was deeply moved, but not exultant. "Sir," said he, like a man that is near choking, "let me go to my cell and think over these strange tidings."

"And pray for me, I do implore you," said the knight.

"Ay, sir, and with all my heart."

Some days passed, and the knight looked to hear his own tale come round again. But no; the prior was silent as the grave. Then after awhile the knight sent for him again, and said, "Good father, what I told you was not under seal of confession."

"I know it, sir," said the prior. "Yet will it go no farther, unless I should outlive you by God's will. Alas! sir, you have taken from me that which was the health of my soul, my belief that I had slain him I hated so unchristian-like. This belief made humility easy to me, and even charity not difficult. What engine of wholesale mortification would be left me now, were I to go a-prating that I slew not the brother I hated? Nay, I will never tell the truth, but carry my precious burden of humility all my days."

"O saint upon earth!" cried the knight. "Outlive me, and then tell the truth."

The monk replied not, but pondered these words.

And it fell out so that the knight died three years after, and the prior closed his eyes, and said masses for his soul; and a good while afterward he did, for the honor of the convent, reveal this true story to two young monks, but bound them by a solemn vow not to spread it during his life. After his death the truth got abroad, and among churchmen the prior was much revered, for that he had cured himself of an uncharitable heart, and had enforced on himself the penalty of unjust shame so many years.

A SPECIAL CONSTABLE.

Two women, sisters, kept the toll-bar at a village in Yorkshire. It stood apart from the village, and they often felt uneasy at night, being lone women.

One day they received a considerable sum of money, bequeathed them by a relation, and that set the simple souls all in a flutter.

They had a friend in the village, the blacksmith's wife; so they went and told her their fears. She admitted that theirs was a lonesome place, and she would not live there, for one, without a man. Her discourse sent them home downright miserable.

The blacksmith's wife told her husband all about it when he came in for his dinner. "The fools!" said he; "how is anybody to know they have got brass in the house?"

"Well," said the wife, "they make no secret of it to me; but you need not go for to tell it to all the town — poor souls!"

"Not I," said the man: "but they will publish it, never fear; leave women-folk alone for making their own trouble with their tongues."

There the subject dropped, as man and wife have things to talk about besides their neighbors.

The old women at the toll-bar, what with their own

fears and their Job's comforter, began to shiver with apprehension as night came on. However, at sunset the carrier passed through the gate, and at sight of his friendly face they brightened up. They told him their care, and begged him to sleep in the house that night. "Why, how can I?" said he; "I'm due at ——; but I will leave you my dog." The dog was a powerful mastiff.

The women looked at each other expressively. "He won't hurt us, will he?" sighed one of them, faintly.

"Not he," said the carrier, cheerfully. Then he called the dog into the house, and told them to lock the door, and went away whistling.

The women were left contemplating the dog with that tender interest apprehension is sure to excite. At first he seemed staggered at this off-hand proceeding of his master; it confused him; then he snuffed at the door; then, as the wheels retreated, he began to see plainly he was an abandoned dog; he delivered a fearful howl, and flew at the door, scratching and barking furiously.

The old women fled the apartment, and were next seen at an upper window, screaming to the carrier, "Come back! come back, John! He is tearing the house down."

"Drat the varmint!" said John, and came back. On the road he thought what was best to be done. The good-natured fellow took his great-coat out of the cart and laid it down on the floor. The mastiff instantly laid himself on it. "Now," said John, sternly, "let us have no more nonsense; you take charge of that till I come back, and don't ye let nobody steal that there, nor yet t'wives' brass. There now," said he, kindly, to the women, "I shall be back this way breakfast-time, and he won't budge till then."

"And he won't hurt *us*, John?"

"Lord, no! Bless your heart, he is as sensible as any

Christian; only Lord sake, woman, don't ye go to take the coat from him, or you'll be wanting a new gown yourself, and maybe a petticoat and all."

He retired, and the old women kept at a respectful distance from their protector. He never molested them; and, indeed, when they spoke cajolingly to him, he even wagged his tail in a dubious way; but still, as they moved about, he squinted at them out of his bloodshot eye in a way that checked all desire on their parts to try on the carrier's coat.

Thus protected, they went to bed earlier than usual, but they did not undress; they were too much afraid of everything, especially their protector. The night wore on, and presently their sharpened senses let them know that the dog was getting restless: he snuffed, and then he growled, and then he got up and pattered about, muttering to himself. Straightway, with furniture, they barricaded the door through which their protector must pass to devour them.

But by and by, listening acutely, they heard a scraping and a grating outside the window of the room where the dog was, and he continued growling low. This was enough: they slipped out at the back-door, and left their money to save their lives: they got into the village. It was pitch dark, and all the houses black but two: one was the public-house, casting a triangular gleam across the road a long way off, and the other was the blacksmith's house. Here was a piece of fortune for the terrified women. They burst into their friend's house. "O Jane! the thieves are come!" and they told her in a few words all that had happened.

"La!" said she; "how timorsome you are! ten to one he was only growling at some one that passed by."

"Nay, Jane, we heard the scraping outside the window. O woman, call your man, and let him go with us."

"My man — he is not here."

"Where is he, then?"

"I suppose he is where other working-women's husbands are, at the public-house," said she, rather bitterly, for she had her experience.

The old women wanted to go to the public-house for him; but the blacksmith's wife was a courageous woman, and, besides, she thought it was most likely a false alarm. "Nay, nay," said she, "last time I went for him there I got a fine affront. I'll come with you," said she. "I'll take the poker, and we have got our tongues to raise the town with, I suppose." So they marched to the toll-bar. When they got near it they saw something that staggered this heroine. There was actually a man half in and half out of the window. This brought the blacksmith's wife to a standstill, and the timid pair implored her to go back to the village. "Nay," said she, "what for? I see but one — and — hark! it is my belief the dog is holding of him." However, she thought it safest to be on the same side with the dog, lest the man might turn on her. So she made her way into the kitchen, followed by the other two; and there a sight met their eyes that changed all their feelings, both toward the robber and toward each other. The great mastiff had pinned a man by the throat, and was pulling at him, to draw him through the window, with fierce but muffled snarls. The man's weight alone prevented it. The window was like a picture-frame, and in that frame there glared, with lolling tongue and starting eyes, the white face of the blacksmith, their courageous friend's villanous husband. She uttered an appalling scream, and flew upon the dog and choked him with her two hands. He held, and growled, and tore till he was all but throttled himself, then he let go, and the man fell. But what struck the ground outside, like a lump of lead,

was in truth a lump of clay! The man was quite dead, and fearfully torn about the throat. So did a comedy end in an appalling and most piteous tragedy; not that the scoundrel himself deserved any pity, but his poor, brave, honest wife, to whom he had not dared confide the villany he meditated.

The outlines of this true story were in several journals. I have put the disjointed particulars together as well as I could. I have tried to learn the name of the village, and what became of this poor widow, but have failed hitherto. Should these lines meet the eye of any one who can tell me, I hope he will, and without delay.

SUSPENDED ANIMATION.

A JOURNAL called the Los Angeles *Star* recorded the following incident at the time it occurred: —

A gentleman in that city had a very large and beautiful tom-cat, which he had reared from a kitten. It was now five years old, and the two animals were mutually attached. Every morning, when the servant brought in the water for his master's tub, Puss used to come in and sit at the side of the bed, and gaze with admiration at his employer, and sometimes mew him out, but retired into a corner during the tubbing, which he thought irrational, and came out again when the biped was clothed and in his right mind. One day the cat was seen in the garden, tumbling over and over in strong convulsions, which ended in its crawling feebly into the house. The master heard, and was very sorry, and searched for the invalid, but could not find him. However, when he went up to bed at night, there was the poor creature stretched upon the floor at the side of the bed, the very place where he used to sit and gaze at his master, and mew him out of bed.

The gentleman was affected to tears by the affectionate creature's death, and his coming there to die. He threw a handkerchief over poor Tom, and passed a downright unhappy night. He determined, however,

to bury his humble friend, and no time was to be lost, the weather being hot. So, when his servant came in to fill his tub, he ordered a little grave to be dug directly, and a box found of a suitable size to receive the remains.

Then he got up, and instead of tubbing, as usual, he thought he would wash poor Tom's body for interment, for it was all stained and dirty with the mould of the garden.

He took the body up, and dropped it into the water with a souse.

That souse was soon followed by a furious splashing that sent the water flying in his face and all about the room, and away flew the cat through the open window, as if possessed by a devil! Nor did the poor body forgive this hydropathic treatment, although successful. He took a perverse view, and had never returned to the house "up to the time of our going to press," says the Los Angeles *Star*.

The cat is not the only animal subject to suspension of vital power. Many men and women have been buried alive in this condition, especially on the Continent, where the law enforces speedy interment. Even in Britain — where they do not shovel one into the earth quite so fast — live persons have been buried, and others have had a narrow escape. I could give a volume of instances at home and abroad — one of them an archbishop, who was actually being carried in funeral procession on an open bier when he came-to, and objected, in what terms I know not; but the Scotch have an excellent formula in similar cases. It runs thus: "Bide ye yet, mon; I hae a deal mair mischief to do fir-r-r-st!"

Two recent English cases I could certify to be true:

one a little girl at Nuneaton, who lay several days without signs of life; another, a young lady, not known to the public, but to me. She was dead — in medicine; but her mother refused to let her be buried, because there was no sign of decomposition, and she did not get so deadly cold as others had whom that mother had lost by death.

This girl remained unburied some days, till another of God's creatures put in his word: a fly thought her worth biting, and blood trickled from the bite. That turned the scale of opinion, and the girl was recovered, and is alive to this day! However, the curious reader who desires to work this vein need go no farther than the index of the *Annual Register* and the *Gentleman's Magazine.* As for me, I must not be tempted outside my immediate subject. The parallel I shall confine a very large theme to is exact.

At the opening of the century the public facilities for anatomy were less than now; so then robbing the churchyards was quite a trade, and an egotist or two did worse — they killed people for the small sum a dead body fetched.

Well, a male body was brought to a certain surgeon by a man he had often employed, and the pair lumped it down on the dissecting-table, and then the vender received his money and went.

The anatomist set to work to open the body; but, in handling it, he fancied the limbs were not so rigid as usual, and he took another look. Yes, the man was dead! no pulsation either. And yet somehow he was not quite cold about the region of the heart.

The surgeon doubted: he was a humane man; and so, instead of making a fine transverse cut like that at which the unfortunate author of "Manon Lescaut" started out of his trance with a shriek to die in right

earnest, he gave the poor body a chance; applied harts-horn, vinegar, and friction, all without success. Still he had his doubts; though, to be frank, I am not clear why he still doubted.

Be that as it may, he called in his assistant, and they took the body into the yard, turned a high tap on, and discharged a small but hard-hitting column of water on to the patient.

No effect was produced but this, which an unscientific eye might have passed over: the skin turned slightly pink in one or two places under the fall of water.

The surgeon thought this a strong proof life was not extinct; but, not to overdo it, he wrapped the man in blankets for a time, and then drenched him again, letting the water strike him hard on the head and the heart in particular.

He followed this treatment up till at last the man's eyes winked, and then he gasped, and presently he gulped, and by and by he groaned, and eventually uttered loud and fearful cries as one battling with death.

In a word, he came-to, and the surgeon put him into a warm bed; and as medicine has its fashions, and bleeding was the panacea of that day, he actually took blood from the poor body. This ought to have sent him back to the place from whence he came — the grave, to wit — but somehow it did not; and next day the reviver showed him with pride to several visitors, and prepared an article.

"Resurrectus" was well fed, and, being a pauper, was agreeable to lie in that bed forever, and eat the bread of science. But, as years rolled on, his preserver got tired of that. However, he had to give him a suit of his own clothes to get rid of him. Did I say years? I must have meant days.

He never did get rid of him; the fellow used to call

at intervals and demand charity, urging that the surgeon had taken him out of a condition in which he felt neither hunger, thirst, nor misery, and so was now bound to supply his natural needs.

However, I will not dwell on this painful part of the picture, lest learned and foreseeing men should, from the date of reading this article, confine resuscitation to quadrupeds.

To conclude with the medical view. To resuscitate animals who seem dead, but are secretly alive, drop them into water from — or else drop water on them from — *a sufficient height.*

LAMBERT'S LEAP.

NEAR Newcastle is Sandyford Bridge, thirty-six feet above the river, which, like many Northern streams, is seldom quite full, but flows in a channel, with the rocky bed bare on each side; an ugly bridge to look up to or to look over, driving by.

In Scotland and the North of England, when our wise ancestors got hold of so dizzy and dangerous a place, they made the most of it; with incredible perversity they led the approach to such a bridge either down a steep or nearly at right angles. They carried Sandyford Lane up to the bridge on the rectangular plan, and thereby secured two events, which were but the natural result of their skill in road-making, yet, taken in conjunction, have other claims to notice.

At a date I hope some day to ascertain precisely, but at present I can only say that it was very early in the present century, a young gentleman called Lambert was run away with by his horse; the animal came tearing down Sandyford Lane, and, thanks to ancestral wisdom aforesaid, charged the bridge with such momentum and impetus, that he knocked a slice of the battlement and half a ton of masonry into the air, and went down after it into the river with his rider.

The horse was killed; Mr. Lambert, though shaken,

was not seriously injured by this awful leap. The masonry was repaired; and, to mark the event, these words, *Lambert's Leap*, were engraved on the new coping-stone. The road was allowed to retain its happy angle.

December 5, 1822, about eleven, forenoon, Mr. John Nicholson of Newcastle, a student in surgery, was riding in Sandyford Lane. His horse ran away with him, and, being unable to take the sharp turn for such cases made and provided, ran against the battlement of the bridge. It resisted this time, and brought the horse to his knees; but the animal, being now thoroughly terrified, rose and actually leaped or scrambled over the battlement, and fell into the rocky bed below, carrying away a single coping-stone; viz., the stone engraved *Lambert's Leap*. That stone was broken to pieces by the fall. The poor young man was so cruelly injured that he never spoke again; he died at seven o'clock that evening; but the horse was so little the worse, and so tamed by the fall, that he was at once ridden into Newcastle for assistance.

The reversed fates of the two animals, and the two incidents happening within an inch of each other, have earned them a place in this collection.

Richardson's "Local Historian's Table-book" relates the second leap, and refers to the first, which is also authenticated.

MAN'S LIFE SAVED BY FOWLS, AND WOMAN'S BY A PIG.

MEN'S lives have been sometimes taken, sometimes saved, by other animals, in ways that sound incredible until the details are given.

Here is a list that offers a glimpse into the subject, nothing more: —

1. Several ships and crews destroyed by fish.
2. Two ships and crews saved by fish.
3. One crew saved by a dog.
4. Many men killed by dogs, and many saved.
5. Many men killed by horses, and many saved.
6. Men killed (and saved) by rats.
7. Man killed by a dead pig.
8. Man saved by fowls.
9. Woman saved from death by a live pig.
10. Woman saved by a crocodile.
11. Ditto by a lady-bird.
12. One man executed by the act of a horse.
13. Crows leading to the execution of murderers.
14. A man's life saved by an ape.
15. Ditto by a bear.
16. Ditto by a fox.

Some of these sound like riddles, and are at least as well worth puzzling over as acrostics and conundrums.

I will leave the majority to rankle in my reader and rouse his curiosity. But I feel he is entitled to some immediate proof that the whole list is not a romance; so I will relate 8 and 9 by way of specimen.

And here let me premise that, as a general rule, I exclude from this collection all those wonderful stories about animals which are found only in books especially devoted to that subject. Those writers are all theorists — men with an amiable bias in favor of the inferior animals. This tempts them to twist and exaggerate facts, and even to repeat stale falsehoods which have gone the round for years, but never rested on the evidence of an eye-witness.

On the other hand, when some plain man, who has no theory, writes down a story at the time and on the spot, and sends it off to a newspaper or other chronicle of current events, where it lies open to immediate contradiction, then we are on the *terra firma* of history.

Example. — Here is a letter written on the spot and at the time to a newspaper, and transferred from that newspaper to the Annual Register: —

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM NOTTINGHAM.

JANUARY 9, 1761.

One Tuesday se'nnight Mr. Hall's servant, of Beckingham, returning from market, and finding the boat at Gainsborough putting off from shore full of people, was so rash and imprudent (to say no worse of it) as to leap his horse into the boat, and with the violence of the fall drove the poor people and their horses to the farther side, which instantly carried the boat into the middle of the stream and overset it.

Imagine you see the unfortunate sufferers all plunging in a deep and rapid river, calling out for help and struggling for life. It was all horror and confusion; and during this situation

the first account was despatched, which assured us that out of eighty souls only five or six were saved. By a second account we were told that there were only thirty on board, but that out of these above twenty had been drowned. This was for some time believed to be the truest account, but I have the pleasure to hear by a third account that many of those who were supposed to be lost have been taken up alive, some of them at a great distance from the ferry, and that no more than six are missing, though numbers were brought to life with difficulty. It was happy for them that so many horses were on board, as all who had time to lay hold of a stirrup or a horse's tail were brought safe to shore.

A poor man who had a basket of fowls upon his arm was providentially buoyed up till assistance could be had, and he, after many fruitless attempts, was at last taken up alive, though senseless, at a distance of four hundred yards from the ferry.

A poor woman who had bought a pig, and had tied one end of a string round its foot and the other round her own wrist, was dragged safe to land in this providential manner.

Observe — I am better than my word; for I have thrown you in the circumstance that the horses saved the rest: certainly in this particular business the lord of the creation does not show that vast superiority to the brutes which he assumes in some of his sculptures and nearly all his writings, Butler's "Analogy" included. The animal that makes the mischief by his folly is a man; the animals that prove incompetent to save their own lives are the men. All the other animals in the boat, down to the very pig, turn to and pull the lords and ladies of the creation out of the mess one of these peerless creatures had plunged them all into.

EXCHANGE OF ANIMALS.

Old traditions linger in country places long after they have perished in great towns. Were the English provinces to be groped for modern antiquities, and the sum total presented, the general reader would be amazed at the mass of ancient superstition lingering in modern England. Not only do popish practices, popish legends and charms, flourish in our most Puritanical counties, but even pagan rites and ceremonies. In the North the mummers at Christmas, of all days, dance a sword-dance which belongs to the worship of a Scandinavian god; in Northumberland and parts of Ireland, the young folk still make little bonfires and leap through them on a certain day, though the practice is forbidden in the Old Testament as an abomination; for this is no other thing than "going through the fire to Baal," and is one of the many signs that we Celts were an Oriental tribe. Any novice wishing to strike this vein of lore without much trouble has only to read the excellent book of Mr. Henderson, and grope the index to "Notes and Queries." I strongly recommend the latter course.

> For index-reading turns no student pale,
> Yet takes the eel of science by the tail.

My own reading in such matters has taught me one thing — to suspect old tradition whenever I encounter any

strange practice down in the country. Why, even rustic mispronunciation is often a relic where it passes for an error. Rusticus calls a coroner's inquest "crowner's quest," and the educated smile superior. But Rusticus is not wrong; he is only in arrear. "Crowner's quest" is the true mediæval form, and was once universal. Every English peasant calls a theătre a theātre, and young gentlemen sneer. Yet theātre is the true pronunciation; and fifty years before Shakespeare, nobody, high or low, mispronounced the word into theătre, as he does and we do.

To the tenacity of old tradition I ascribe a prevalent notion, in rude parts of this country, that an Englishman and his wife can divorce themselves under certain conditions: 1st, the parties must consent; 2d, there must be a public auction; 3d, the lady must be sold with a halter round her neck. That our rural population ever invented this law is improbable in itself and against evidence; there are examples of the practice as old as any chronicle we have; and I really suspect that in some barbarous age — later, perhaps, than our serious worship of Baal, but anterior to our earliest Saxon laws — this rude divorce by consent was the unwritten law of Britain.

The thing has been done in my day many times, and related in the journals, and I observe that it is always done with similar ceremonies, and that the lower order of people, though they jeer, are not shocked at it, nor does it seem to strike them as utterly and profoundly illegal. It dates, I apprehend, from a time when marriage was a partnership at will; and the Roman theory that marriage is a sacrament, and the English theory that marriage is not a sacrament, but half a sacrament, were alike unknown to a primitive people.

My note-book contains numerous examples. I select one with a bit of color, which was published at the date when it occurred.

Joseph Thompson rented a farm of forty acres in a village three miles from Carlisle. In 1829 he married a spruce, lively girl twenty-two years of age.

They had many disputes, and no children. So after three years they agreed to part.

The bell-man was sent around the village to announce that Joseph Thompson would sell Mary Anne Thompson by auction on April 5, 1832, at noon precisely.

At the appointed hour Joseph Thompson stood on a table, and his wife a little below him on an oak chair, with a halter of straw round her neck. He put her up for sale in terms that a bystander thought it worth while to take down on the spot.

"Gentlemen, I have to offer to your notice my wife, Mary Anne Thompson, otherwise Williamson. It is her wish as well as mine to part forever, and will be sold without reserve to the highest bidder. Gentlemen, the lot now offered for competition has been to me a bosom serpent. I took it for my comfort and the good of my house; but it became my tormentor, a domestic curse, a night invasion, and a daily devil. The Lord deliver us from termagant wives, and troublesome widows! Gentlemen, avoid them as you would a mad dog, a roaring lion, a loaded pistol, *cholera morbus*, or any other pestilential phenomenon" —

Here it seems to have occurred to Joseph Thompson that he was not going the way to sell his lot at a high figure, so he tried to be more the auctioneer and less the husband.

"However," said he, "now I have told you her little defects, I will present the bright and sunny side of her. She can read novels, milk cows, and laugh and weep with the same ease that you could toss off a glass of ale. What the poet says of women in general is true to a hair of this one, —

'Heaven gave to women the peculiar grace
To laugh, to weep, and cheat the human race.'

She can make butter and scold the maid; she can sing Moore's Melodies, and pleat her own frills and caps. She cannot make rum nor gin nor whiskey; but she is a good judge of all three from long experience in tasting them. What shall we say for her, with all her perfections and imperfections? fifty shillings to begin?"

There was a dead silence. He had better have employed George Robins, Sr. "*Cuilibet in suâ arte credendum.*" There was no bidding at all. Then the auctioneer was angry, and threatened to take the lot home.

The company in general sustained this threat with composure; but one Mears conceived hopes, and asked modestly whether an exchange could not be made. "I have here," said he, "a Newfoundland dog — a beauty. He can fetch and carry; and if you fall in the water drunk or sober, he'll pull you out."

Thompson approved the dog, but objected to give a Christian in even exchange for a quadruped. Each species has a prejudice in its own favor, owing to which the company backed him. So at last Mears agreed to give the dog and twenty shillings to boot.

The bargain was made. Thompson took the halter off the wife and put it round the dog; and Mears led his purchase away by the hand, amid the shouts and huzzas of the multitude, in which they were joined by Thompson.

After awhile, however, the latter recollected he had a duty to perform. "I must drink the new-married couple's health," said he gravely. Accordingly he adjourned with his dog and his money to the public-house, and toasted his deliverer so zealously that he took nothing home from the sale except the dog. Fortunately for *him*, a man can't drink his superior.